

HOW & WHEN

Do We Become
Children of God?





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How and When

DO WE BECOME
CHILDREN OF GOD?

BY FIFTY WITNESSES

EDITED BY

W. HOSTE and R. M'ELHERAN

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EDITORS' NOTE.

THE responsibility of the various contributors is limited to their own papers. The Editors accept responsibility, generally speaking, for the teaching of all the papers, though here and there a sentence may have been left in deference to the judgment of the writer, which may not have their absolute concurrence. The paper by H. B. Macartney, M.A., prepared specially for this book, was almost his last written message before his death. Thus, "he being dead yet speaketh."

It has been thought well to add the testimony of several well-known servants of Christ, now departed, who were singularly owned of God in the conversion of souls. Our prayer is, that He may be pleased to use these extracts from their writings with the other articles contributed, to the blessing of the unsaved and to the edification of His people.

W. H.

R. M'E.

HOW AND WHEN

—DO WE BECOME— CHILDREN OF GOD?

Life in a Look

By MAURICE BALDWIN, D.D.,

Late Bishop of Huron.

AM I wrong in supposing you wish to know HOW TO BE SAVED? If I am, and you really care nothing for the subject, please, nevertheless, read on. In these pages, you will find nothing but that which really concerns yourself, and that which concerns ourselves demands at least our careful attention. If, on the contrary, you really wish for this knowledge, then the very first truth you have to learn is : *the vital necessity of the NEW BIRTH.*

This was the first doctrine our blessed Lord taught Nicodemus, and this is the first, I am sure, He would teach YOU.

In the third chapter of John's Gospel we read that Nicodemus, a learned ruler of the Jews, came to Jesus by night, apparently to enquire of Him the way of salvation. "Rabbi," said Nicodemus, "we know that Thou art a Teacher come from God : for no man can do these miracles that Thou doest, except God be with him." And now, I will ask you carefully to weigh our Lord's answer to

Nicodemus. Its striking peculiarity is, that it seems to have no apparent connection with the words of Nicodemus ; and yet, doubtless, it was the exact answer he needed. The learned Jew had begun the interview by saying : " Rabbi, we know that Thou art a Teacher come from God." This remark the Saviour passes by ; and, addressing Himself to the great truth of which Nicodemus was most profoundly ignorant, namely, his need of a NEW BIRTH. He utters these memorable words : " Verily ! verily ! I say unto thee, Except a man be born again he cannot see the Kingdom of God."

These words of the Lord Jesus are as directly addressed to YOU, reader, as they were to Nicodemus ; that is, if you have not yet experienced this new birth. Seeing they are for *your* everlasting life, and that the Speaker is none other than Jesus Christ Himself, I implore you both earnestly and prayerfully to weigh them.

Observe, first, Christ goes to the very root of things. He says spiritual life begins with spiritual birth. Men see physical activity all about them, and they know that in each case this activity had its origin in *birth*. There was first birth, then development, then manhood, and with manhood, ceaseless industry of mind and body. In spiritual matters, however, thousands, who fully admit the above, will persist in *reversing* this well known law. The idea to which they most tenaciously cling is, that if they can only *do* those things which are pleasing in God's sight, then God will grant them life. But in spiritual matters, as in physical, life is first, activity afterwards.

How often, for instance, do we hear this text given out : " So run that we may obtain," and then the glorious and completed salvation of the Son of God is described as a race in which the swiftest

runner alone obtains Eternal life. The congregation, largely composed of people absolutely dead before God, are then exhorted to run this race, and by all means to obtain this life. It is just this outrageous perversion of the Word of God, which utterly misleads thousands; it bolsters them up with the false idea that they are the children of God, when they are not; it is a going to the dead to give them employment; assigning labour to those who have no life; and the result is utter and hopeless failure. Spiritual life only begins with spiritual birth; and as those to whom I allude, have not been born of the Spirit, they can no more fulfil the precepts of the Christian life, than you, reader, can fly with the eagle, or race with the lightning of heaven.

Literally, the word "again" is "*from above.*" Now, we have all had one birth from beneath; that is, our natural, physical birth, when we came into the world; but Christ says we need another—one from above. WHEN, therefore, we have this birth from above, we are, in our Lord's language, born of the Spirit; we have experienced this wondrous birth, without which no man can see the Kingdom of God. I would have you also notice that the two births, the physical and the spiritual, never occur together. Man was altogether "born in sin," with a "heart deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked."

Born, therefore, with such a heart as this do you not indeed need to be *born again*?

With this subject, I wish to draw your attention to an expression, very common, but one thoroughly unscriptural. I refer to the oft-used phrase, "a *change* of heart." It does not occur in the whole range of Scripture. We find such expressions as a "new heart," "another heart," a "new spirit,"

but never a *changed heart*. The truth is that God never mends, renews, or changes the natural heart. Our Lord, therefore, in speaking to Nicodemus, did not say: "Except a man's heart be renewed or changed, he shall not see the Kingdom of God," but, "Except a man be BORN AGAIN."

Not the faintest idea of the truth He uttered, passed through the mind of Nicodemus; for he asked with astonishment, "How can a man be born when he is old," etc. To this the Redeemer makes the memorable reply, "Verily! verily! I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God." Our first enquiry must be, What did our Lord mean by the expression "born of water"?

Now, there are many who believe that by this word "water" we are to understand baptism. I wish, therefore, to say on what ground I *utterly dissent* from such an interpretation.

If water be explained here as being the literal water of baptism, all mention of the Redeemer's work in the regeneration of man is excluded from a sentence in which Christ is teaching what is the *very nature* of regeneration. This is irreconcilable with the fact, that the Bible teems with statements to the effect, that we have life *only* from the Lord Jesus Christ. He Himself says: "I am the life." John adds: "He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life."

Paul, in writing to the Corinthians, says: "In Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the Gospel" (1 Cor. iv. 15). So also James: "Of His own will begat He us with the word of truth" (James i. 18). Peter's testimony is also to the same effect: "Being *born again*, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God which liveth and abideth for ever" (1 Pet. i. 23).

To be born, therefore, of water, is to be born by the agency of GOD'S WORD ; and to be born of the Spirit, is to be born through the Holy Ghost using that Word. The time WHEN this new creation takes place is that moment when the sinner first, with the heart, believes in Jesus Christ as his Saviour.

What Nicodemus was anxious to know was, "How" a man could be born when he is old? Our Lord said it was by faith in Himself as uplifted on the cross. Standing before this tremendous Sacrifice, and believing on Christ thus offered, the sinner not only obtains the full and eternal pardon of his sins, but also full spiritual health, that is, he is BORN AGAIN. Thus we see Christ has forever connected regeneration with faith in Himself as God's appointed Sacrifice for sin ; and so close and so real is this connection, that whenever a sinner believes in Jesus Christ as the bearer away of his sins on the cross, at that moment is he also born again : at that moment he receives power to become "a Son of God" (John i. 12).

By Nature Children of Wrath

By W. H. BENNET, Yeovil.

IT has been suggested that a few words of personal experience might be a good answer to the question, "*How and when do we become children of God?*"

I was baptised as an infant, and, as I grew up, was taught that in my baptism "I was made a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the Kingdom of heaven." Having from the age of seven to be more in bed than at school, probably caused me to be more thoughtful than some, and I

became a religious boy, being so trained in High Church doctrines by the clergyman (not by my parents) that I looked upon any form of "dissent" as sinful. At the proper age I was "confirmed," became a regular communicant, and was diligent in Church services and religious work. When I was about sixteen my friend the clergyman left, which was a great trial to me, but, on principle, I was as loyal to his successor as to him. He was evangelical, and imperceptibly his teaching led me to see things in a different light. When I was seventeen, I was moved by a sense of the need of the pea-pickers of Middlesex (better known as the hop-pickers of Kent, where they go later), and obtaining some tracts I visited them in their camps, and was permitted to read the Scriptures to them. But even up to this time I had no true knowledge of my own need, and it was only after I began this service that I was brought face to face with the fact that instead of being a child of God I was a *sinner*, and became concerned about my own salvation. I read the Scriptures and prayed, and one night, after being a good while on my knees, I definitely cast myself upon the Lord Jesus and what He had accomplished for sinners. Still the question of being born again perplexed me. I was introduced by correspondence to a servant of Christ in South Devon, and wrote to him somewhat thus: "I do trust in Christ alone for salvation; but how am I to know that I am born again?"

His reply was substantially: "The very fact of your being able thus to trust in the Lord Jesus, and to rest in Him alone for salvation, is itself an evidence of new birth." Two years later exercise of conscience about various things led to my leaving the Church of England; but into that I do not enter here.

Since those days I have learned more clearly from the Scriptures that the only way in which a sinner can become a child of God, is by new birth, and therefore I feel more than ever the importance of the question how this new birth takes place. In John iii., the Lord Jesus reiterated the absolute necessity of being born again in order to enter into the Kingdom of God, and then, in answer to the question of Nicodemus, "How can these things be?" He said, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life." Therefore it is by looking to Christ as the One lifted up on the cross to atone for sin, or, in other words, trusting in Him as the One who "died for our sins," that we are born again or receive eternal life. It is then that the Holy Spirit, who quickens us, begins to dwell in us and to lead us, and as the Apostle Paul declares, "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, *they* are the sons of God" (Rom. viii. 14).

The grand truth of Sonship shines too clearly on the inspired page to be denied, but who will be surprised that Satan should seek to obscure and make void such a stupendous truth? His two chief ways of doing this are (1) by the delusion of baptismal regeneration, which is the foundation of all national systems of so-called Christianity, and (2) by the fearful teaching that *all men* are by nature children of God, and that the Gospel simply calls upon them to believe it. For both he who affirms that a child of Adam is made a child of God through a ceremony of human devising, and he who asserts that a sinner dead in sin is a child of God are alike rendering service to the great enemy of all truth, and are denying the Word of God, which asserts that *those who receive Christ*

become children of God, and that it is by divine birth alone that they do so (John i. 12, 13).

It will be found that those who are ensnared by either of these false teachings have no true sense of the reality of the relationship to God of His children, of the dignity of such a position, or of the glory that awaits them as "heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ."

Since the above was written, my attention has been drawn to some words of a popular "Evangelical" teacher, given in a widely circulated "Evangelical" weekly paper. This teacher describes men generally as those who have never claimed their inheritance, and he adds, "It is for us to tell them they are heirs who are being advertised for." How different is this from the teaching of Holy Scripture! The apostle writes, "If children, then heirs," and shows as we have seen, that men can only become children of God by new birth and faith in Christ. What a delusion to tell sinners dead in sins that they are "heirs of God"!

What is more calculated to hinder that true knowledge of their state as sinners which shall lead to a desire for Christ? Beware then, dear reader, of the soul-destroying errors against which this little paper gives warning.

Ye Must Be Born Again

By HUGH D. BROWN, M.A., Dublin.

ALTHOUGH God created Adam perfect in innocence, yet he lapsed from this state, and great was the fall, and "so death passed upon all men for that all have sinned." The Hebrew words for sin suggest an awful crash as from Cosmos to chaos,

ruin of a terrible and blasting description, a missing of the mark as even by a hair's breadth, a coming short of the goal of perfect attainment. The damning evidences of the fall face us in every sorrow, bereavement, asylum, jail, and cemetery. These facts cannot be gainsaid, and in their light it is not merely folly, but wickedness to speak of sin as "a quest after God," "a mental indiscretion," "a falling upstairs." The Scriptures of the Old and New Testament speak clearly and decisively concerning "the exceeding sinfulness of sin," that its wages is death, separation from God, from purity, and from heaven unto "wailing and gnashing of teeth."

Thus Christ, our blessed Lord, speaking to one of the most moral, religious, amiable, and educated of men, lays down God's clear cut ultimatum to the sinner, "Except a man be born from above, he cannot see the kingdom of God. This goes, of course, at once to the very root of matters, showing that neither reformation, education, nor evolution can bring eternal life to the souls of men "dead in trespasses and sins." The statement may seem narrow and bigoted, but Christ Himself asserts that "that which is born of the flesh is flesh," and by no process of moral improvement can it be transformed into "the spirit." *There must be birth from above*, a new nature, God-given, God-nourished, and God-preserved, and to those only who have received this blessing do the Holy Scriptures hold forth hopes of eternal life and heaven. The distinction between the children of God and the children of the devil is clearly revealed from the utterances of the Lord Himself, and of His Apostles Paul and John, this distinction culminating in a final and eternal separation, "Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared

for you from the foundation of the world"—
"Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire,
prepared for the devil and his angels."

Gazing down upon a ruined world in all its pollution and despair, God, in His free, absolute sovereign grace, resolved in His eternal counsels to lift out of this abyss of pollution "a great multitude which no man could number," and to make them by the impartation of a new and eternal life His own children. To effect and carry out this loving programme, our Divine Lord, the only-begotten Son of the Father, was incarnated at Bethlehem, and "became obedient unto death even the death of the cross" at Calvary, there "giving His life a ransom for many, and through His work as a substitutionary Saviour effecting their justification. To thus accomplish the Father's will and make a sufficient atonement, "the Just for the unjust," "Christ died and rose and revived," and through the merits of His death, followed by burial and resurrection, God, the holy One, can thus "be just and the Justifier of him which believeth in Jesus," imparting through the Spirit's mighty and enriching power faith to the unbelieving, life to the dead, and salvation to the lost. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." This deep mystery may stumble some, yet it is God's way of saving and regenerating fallen men.

How simply our Saviour Himself puts it when speaking to Nicodemus, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life"—
"Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God"—"For ye are all the *children of God*

by FAITH in Christ Jesus." The moment a poor, needy sinner looks away from his sins, surroundings, and fears, to the crucified Saviour hanging on the cross, there and then he becomes a child of God, or, as it is put in another Scripture, "As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." The reception in all our need, of Christ Jesus as God's provision and Saviour for us sinners (not the efficacy of baptismal waters, nor the feeding upon the mere emblems—bread and wine) immediately entitles us to the assurance that we have the full privileges of eternal life as members of the family of God. If anyone reading these lines desires to share in these privileges yet feels his faith dim and his heart powerless, let him call upon the Lord even now in his helplessness, and he shall receive this blessing from the Lord for "whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." Yea, even a groan of honest confession and heartbroken contrition, if but the sigh be directed towards God in Christ will secure our pardon, for salvation is not so much in our faith, as in His grace, not in our trust, but in the object of that confidence—the Christ of God "Who was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification."

It is our joy having thus once believed on Him to know without a shadow of doubt that "*Now are we the sons of God*"; "Heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ. Now, though still conscious alas of inbred sin, now, though still battling in sternest conflict with a host of foes, now, though shadowed by sorrow and death, now, on this the earthward side of Heaven's gates, it is now our priv-

ilege to have the comfortable assurance that we are the children of God, because the Word of God bears witness to the fact (1 John iii. 1-2). Only let us be careful that we are real and true in this matter, for children must have some resemblance to their Father "And we know we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren" (1 John iii. 14).

Are you, my reader, the possessor of this happy gift of God's eternal life? If not are you going to lose it by drifting carelessly past God's "so great salvation," out towards the open ocean of a lost eternity. Oh friend deal not, I plead with you, merely with side issues concerning the fate of the heathen in China or mid Africa but know this, that here and now the gospel of God's grace in all its winsome charm and solemn sternness is facing you. "He that believeth on Him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the Name of the only begotten Son of God." It may be that early memories cluster round your heart of when you learned the songs of Zion, and lisped petitions after a godly parent's prayers; it may be that you recall the day of vow and resolution when raised from sickness or moved to tears at some revival gathering; or it may be the gracious memories of the sainted dead rise up and plead for the surrender of your soul to Christ, or disappointed hopes and a shallow empty world or thunders of the broken law combine to bid you turn away from self and sin and unbelief and with a great cry for mercy cast yourself upon the broad love of God to broken and contrite hearts; one thing I know, the Christ of God now stands with outstretched pierced hands and He would woo thy soul, and cleanse thy guilt, and clothe thee with divine righteousness and crown thee with His glory. He

waits, He pleads. Oh, sinner, break not past that living barrier of flesh and blood, trample not God's incarnate love and Christ's atoning blood beneath thy feet, lest wrath indeed arise bitter, cutting and eternal, and thou "suddenly be destroyed and that without remedy." Rather, looking into the face of Him who "died for the ungodly," receive this present, priestly, irrevocable absolution, "Thy sins are forgiven thee; thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace."

Conversion a Vital Necessity

By J. R. CALDWELL, Glasgow

NO two faces are alike, and no two Christians have passed through exactly the same experience, but there is only one way to-day by which a son of Adam can become a child of God, and that is by believing on the Lord Jesus Christ.

When I was quite a young man I came to know that I was not saved. My sincere desire was to become a true Christian, and at this stage I remember marking in my Bible the words, "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled" (Matt. v. 6). I hoped that by being religious I would gradually become so good as to be satisfied that I was a true Christian. Part of the process was my becoming a member of an Evangelical Church. I was interviewed by two deacons, asked if I believed the Scriptures to be the Word of God? I could honestly say I did: asked if I had any confidence in my own righteousness? I answered, No, none whatever,

I knew it to be only filthy rags : asked if I believed on the Lord Jesus? I answered, I did, for I knew unless He saved me none else could. I was well reported of to the church, and was received as a member. I taught in the Sunday School, joined the Y.M.C.A. belonging to the church, and passed for a Christian with all who knew me. But with an orthodox evangelical creed I had never been born again, and sin and the world retained their power over me. Had I been asked, "Have you peace with God?" I would promptly have answered "No; can you tell me how to get it?"

I would here most earnestly warn all who read this to make sure that they are on the right foundation. Thousands upon thousands, we fear, are respectably and religiously going to hell. They have religion, they are church members, they "take the sacrament," they engage in good works; but they have never been "born again," they have never had "peace with God," they have no personal knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ; they have known no such change as "conversion," they cannot even say, "whereas I was blind now I see." May this paper be used of God to show them that they are still unsaved and dead in trespasses and in sins.

It was some time after this that a well-known evangelist of fifty years ago came to have a series of meetings in the church. The truth was so forcibly put that I felt I had not experienced the great change, and at the close of one meeting I waited as an anxious one among many, and heard from John v. 24, "He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed out of death into life." This was indeed good news to me. I heard, I believed, and I had everlasting life. There was nothing about my character good or bad,

whatever I was, it was simply *to hear, to believe, and to have.*

But still, this did not yield me the peace I needed. Another evening again I waited, and the preacher said, "I will read two words from this Book, and if you believe them you are saved." I waited breathlessly to hear the "two words," I thought, if they are in this Bible they are true, and believe them I will! He read from Col. i. 20: "PEACE MADE." A finished work; nothing to be added to it; God's own work for me the sinner. "Peace made by the blood of His cross." Now I saw that I had all along been looking in the wrong direction for righteousness. I had been looking in, instead of looking unto Him who made peace by the blood of His cross, and who is "made of God unto us RIGHTEOUSNESS." Now I saw that it was not by righteousness wrought in me but by righteousness imputed to me apart from works that I was to be saved. I might say the great change took place through believing three plain Scripture truths:

1st (John v. 24). Heareth, believeth, hath everlasting life.

2nd (Col. i. 20). Peace made by the blood of His cross.

3rd (Rom. iv. 1-6) Righteousness imputed without works to all that believe.

From this time the Bible became a new book to me, my constant and loved companion. I read it with opened eyes, and beheld in it wondrous things.

Up till then I had no special regard for children of God, especially if I thought they would ask me disagreeable questions as to whether or not I was saved. Since then, by a kind of divine free-masonry, I am one with all saints, and find my companionship with such. Prayer became not a mere formal duty, but a great necessity, "the Christian's vital breath."

It was not long till I found the joy of making known the glad news to others. In a sunk kitchen, with an earthen floor, several of one very poor family were led to trust and rejoice in the Lord. That is now between forty and fifty years ago, and several of them remain to this day witnessing for the truth of the Gospel. Truly we need not be ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it (and nothing else) is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. The subsequent experience of conflict within between flesh and spirit has been very real. "In me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing." But the Lord Jesus Christ is "able to save unto the uttermost all who come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Heb. vii. 25). He saves, and "He is able to keep us from falling" (Jude 24). "And if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous, and He is the propitiation for our sins" (1 John ii. 1, 2). "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John i. 9).

The Necessity of the New Birth

By W. D. DUNN, Cambuslang

GOD'S great master-piece is the work of REDEMPTION by His well-beloved Son, the Lord Jesus Christ: a work so *infinitely great*, that no man or angel can fathom its depths. It will form a theme of praise for the redeemed throughout all eternity. "And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to

God by Thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation " (Rev. v. 9). Another divine master-piece is the work of regeneration; that of creating a poor, lost sinner anew, and transforming him by His Holy Spirit into the very image of His Son, in order thus to share His glory in the coming ages. "We know that, when He shall appear, *we shall be like Him*; for we shall see Him as He is " (1 John iii. 2).

Redemption is necessary to make it possible for a guilty sinner to be saved; and REGENERATION is necessary to make such fit to enter into the kingdom of God.

Our blessed Lord said, "Ye must be BORN AGAIN" (John iii. 7). So the great question of the hour is—Have I been born again? Everything hangs upon the answer we give to this momentous question. If we have not experienced the new birth; if we have not been born of water and the Spirit—that is, by the word of God applied to our souls by the power of the Holy Ghost; then we are still "dead in trespasses and sins," far from God, and on our way to hell. It matters not, in the least degree, what position we hold in the social circle, or in the religious world—Am I born again? that is the question. And I pray you, remember it is not the old flesh improved, but the new nature imparted: no moral reform; no self-improvement; no empty form of religion, or even the profession of Christianity, will satisfy the holy claims of God; there must be a new birth. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh," and is of no value in the sight of God. "The flesh profiteth nothing." "They that are in the flesh cannot please God." And all unregenerate persons are "in the flesh," that is to say, not only "in the flesh" in the sense of being alive in the body, but in the sense

of being in their natural evil state before God, as children of Adam.

What communion could there possibly be between a holy God and that which is incurably evil? Nicodemus, the religious Pharisee, the ruler and teacher in Israel ; and the poor Samaritan woman in all her degradation and shame, were alike unregenerate. There is no difference, "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God." Therefore, we must be born again. This is the Lord's message to you. Let nothing induce you to neglect it.

"HOW CAN THESE THINGS BE?"

A solemn question, asked, I believe, by a deeply exercised soul ; one who was anxious to know the truth. Have you ever asked this question, "What must I do to be saved?"

If you are longing to become a child of God, hear what our Lord said to the religious ruler : "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up : that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

The brazen serpent lifted up by Moses in the wilderness, by the command of God, was the object of faith for the serpent-bitten Israelites ; and the moment they turned their dying eyes to it they were healed, because it was the divine provision for their need.

So the Lord Jesus Christ, lifted up on Calvary's Cross, and now exalted to the highest seat in glory, is the object of faith for the needy sinner ; and the moment we look to Him, receive Him, believe on Him, we become children of God. Not works, not feelings, not visions ; but simple faith in the blessed

Lord Jesus Christ, who died and rose again from the dead, gives the children of Adam a glorious place among the children of God.

Over forty years ago, I turned my burdened heart, and tear-dimmed eyes to the crucified Lord, and my burden rolled away, and the true light shone into my soul ; and His matchless grace has kept me all these years in the place of service for Him. He will do the same for you ; only look and live.

WHEN.

“ Behold, *now* is the accepted time ; behold, *now* is the day of salvation ” (2 Cor. vi. 2). “ All things are *now* ready.” Salvation, full, free, personal, and present, is ready and waiting for your acceptance. There is nothing left on God’s part to be accomplished. He has done all, and given His best for you. The Lord Jesus Christ has done His best for you, when He poured out His life’s blood on the cross ; and the blessed Holy Spirit has done, and is doing, His best to win you to Christ. *Why not be saved now?*

There was only one thing that kept the Jews from Christ. He was in the midst of them proffering living water, but they would not drink. He was the eternal life, but they would not come to Him. “ O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killed the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not ” (Matt. xxiii. 37). He would—They would not. Reader, what say you? He is at this moment calling for you. In your path to eternal death, the cross rises at this moment as a barrier to stop you. “ Why will ye die? ” Before you put this book down, make choice of Christ as your own personal Saviour ; yield up to

Him, and the controversy between your soul and God will be settled by trusting the slain Lamb of God ; and you will be at peace with Him. " Fear not, only believe," and from this moment, if you are a child of Adam, you will become a child of God. Oh, wondrous grace !

Then the sweet knowledge of His pardoning love will flow into your heart, removing all your doubts and fears ; enabling you to say without any reserve, " My Beloved is mine, and I am His." The apostle says, " The Holy Spirit beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God " ; " And because ye are children, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father."

" Blessed assurance—Jesus is mine !
 Oh, what a foretaste of glory divine !
 Heir of salvation, purchase of God ;
 Born of His Spirit, washed in His blood."

Life through the Living One

By J. C. M. DAWSON, B.A., Belfast.

I DESIRE to answer this question as clearly and briefly as possible.

(1) *No person enters this world a child of God.* We have all inherited from Adam a fallen, sinful nature, and David's statement is true of each member of the race, " Behold, I was shapen in iniquity ; and in sin did my mother conceive me " (Ps. li. 5). The children of Adam are " by nature the children of wrath " (Eph. ii. 3), and each possesses a heart " deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked " (Jer. xvii. 9). " There is no difference : for all

have sinned, and come short of the glory of God " (Rom. iii. 22, 23), and are " dead in trespasses and sins " (Eph. ii. 3) to God, and have only the " wages of sin " to expect which is " death " (Rom. vi. 23), and that death the Scripture describes as the lake of fire (Rev. xx. 14, 15), where the sinner, who dies in his sins, is eternally separated from God, and deprived of every blessing. Consequently each person needs to be made alive unto God—each is absolutely without eternal life by nature.

(2) *How a person becomes a child of God.* " God was manifest in the flesh " (1 Tim. iii. 16) in the person of Jesus Christ. The life of the sinless Christ was unforfeited, death could not claim it, no one could take it from Him (John x. 18). He gave up His life for the sheep (*i.e.*, those who hear His voice, are known of Him, and who follow Him, John x. 28), and in resurrection He has taken it again (John x. 15, 18), and the person that believes in Him, though up to then dead in sins, has everlasting life (John iii. 15, 16, 36 ; vi. 47). He has become a child of God, being born of God (John i. 12, 13 ; 1 John v. 1). Having " received Him " he has received the " gift of God " which is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord (Rom. vi. 23).

(3) *The time when a person becomes a child of God.* Until the sinner believes in Christ he is without life (John iii. 36 ; v. 24 ; 1 John v. 12) ; on believing in Him he has it (John vi. 47). That moment he is a child of God, " born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever " (1 Pet. i. 23), and, being God's child, has been made a partaker of the divine nature of the One who has begotten him. As a child of God, he is exhorted to lay hold on eternal life (1 Tim. vi. 12, 19), *i.e.*, to enjoy it, live it practically, possess it so

thoroughly by abiding in Christ that it may indeed be manifest that Christ liveth in him (Gal. ii. 20) by the fruit of the Spirit being very abundant. When the Lord comes, mortality shall be "swallowed up by life" (2 Cor. v. 4), for He "hath brought life (for the living saints) and incorruptibility (for the sleeping saints) to light through the Gospel" (2 Tim. i. 10). Then they shall be "the sons of God, being the sons of the resurrection" (Luke xx. 36).

(4) *My personal experience.* I left home about 11.30 a.m., on 13th February, 1883, dead to God in my sins, and on my way to a hell, well-deserved, yet anxious to be saved. About five minutes afterwards, through believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, I had eternal life (John vi. 47), and was assured of it on the authority of the Scripture, which cannot be broken (John iii. 16). In a moment I had passed out of death into life, I was a child of God, and bound for my Father's home on high.

The New Birth

By J. MURRAY DUNCAN, I.C.O., London.

I. MAN is competent to change his religion indefinitely ; as he is competent to change his politics. The change is the result in each case of the operation of the human faculties, and is nothing more. Certain attractions become aversions and *vice versa*, but the man in his nature remains what he was before the change. His own judgment is still his only guide. In contrast to this, the Holy Scriptures reveal to us a change in men which is of a wholly different character. It is spoken of in God's

Word in these terms, namely, *A new creation*. "Wherefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature" (marginal alternative "there is a new creation") 2 Cor. v. 17. "*Begotten of God*." "Whosoever is begotten of God doeth no sin, because his seed abideth in him; and he cannot sin because he is begotten of God" (1 John iii. 9). *Passed out of death into life*. "We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren" (1 John iii. 14).

II. This change is attributed to God, and could not indeed be brought about otherwise; "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the voice thereof, but knowest not whence it cometh, and whither it goeth; so is everyone that is born of the Spirit" (John iii. 8). "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his great mercy begat us again into a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" (1 Peter i. 3).

III. This change is never represented as taking place apart from Jesus Christ the Son of God. See the portion above quoted from 2 Cor. v. 17, and note the words, "If any man believe in Christ"

IV. The Holy Spirit is the immediate agent producing the change, and the Holy Scriptures the means employed. "Knowing brethren beloved of God your election, how that our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Ghost and in much assurance" (1 Thess. i. 5). "When ye received from us the word of the message, even the word of God, ye accepted it not as the word of men, but, as it is in very truth the word of God, which also worketh in you that believe" (1 Thess. ii. 13).

Apostolic preachers handled an instrument of omnipotence when they preached Christ, with the results

which the Scriptures record in detail. This is still open to all who will accept the divinely appointed conditions.

V. Man's part, however essential and important is not primary but secondary.

In the ordinary case, the beginning of the creative operation is that the Word of God, hitherto perhaps esteemed no more than an interesting book with which everyone should have some acquaintance more or less, assumes the character of God speaking through the ear or the eye into the understanding, the heart, the conscience. Its testimony is that the man godward is dead in trespasses and in sin (Eph. ii. 1), that he is a lawless being—"Sin is lawlessness" (1 John iii. 4), and that he is under the judgment of God" (Rom. iii. 19). This new voice creates genuine concern within the man, and is no excitement of "revivalism," but a result corresponding to the character of its cause. He, at length, delivered from his conceits, realises how far short he has come of the glory of God.

There is no silencing of this voice ; it imperatively commands attention. The man is in the grip of the Spirit of truth, he is held under a new light which discovers to him himself in a character he never imagined. Thus the first stage towards new birth is reached when man receives God's testimony that he is an unclean creature, and that he cannot change his own nature into a clean condition. If the operation terminated here, it would produce only despair.

The next step is the presentation of the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was sent in the likeness of sinful flesh, but was in reality without sin. This sent One puts forth high and hitherto unheard of claims. He has been sent by the Father in order that a new order of being might come into existence

of which He Himself is the primal type (John v. 19 to 47, and many other passages).

This new order of being must be absolutely discharged from the guilt of sin, and cleansed from its presence. Death is essential to sever the connection with the old order and the guilt pertaining to it. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus" (Rom. viii. 1). For whom He foreknew He also foreordained to be conformed to the image of His Son (Rom. viii. 29).

Out of Adam, the first man into the second Man. The Lord from heaven is the great transition, and, apart from it, nothing else counts with God. While on God's side it is a divine quickening, on man's side it is faith in the One whom God has sent and set forth as a propitiation. Faith causes God's gift to find a footing within man, its generation is by the presentation of God to the heart in His character of love, of holiness, of righteousness, of mercy, all expressed in Christ. The old creature was a doubter, perhaps a denier; the new creature is a truster and on excellent grounds, to wit, that God who cannot lie has spoken. "This is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent" (John xvii. 3).

When life has thus been imparted, its exercise immediately begins by approach to God with thanksgiving, praise, worship; its manifestation among men is that the life also of Jesus may be manifested in our body (2 Cor. iv. 10).

Every man who knows the experimental regeneration of the Holy Scriptures will devoutly say, "For of Him, and through Him, and unto Him, are all things. To Him be the glory for ever. Amen" (Rom. xi. 36). Amen, and Amen.

The Two Families

By W. W. FEREDAY

THE human race is divided into two great families, described respectively in Holy Scripture as "the children of God" (1 John iii. 1), and "the children of wrath" (Eph. ii. 3). The destiny of the one family is heavenly glory; the destiny of the other is eternal woe. Through the abounding grace of God, transitions are taking place daily from the one family to the other; persons once children of wrath becoming transformed into children of God, their revolutionised lives testifying to the greatness of the change wrought in them.

How is this mighty change effected? The work being admittedly divine, what are the means ordained and used by God to achieve such a result? If human opinions were of any value, there is remarkable unanimity amongst the great organised religious bodies in Christendom concerning this question. Sacramentalists of every shade, Roman, Greek, Anglican, etc., answer: "Baptism, as administered by priestly hands." In the ordinance of baptism, we are assured, persons become regenerated, children of God, and members of Christ. But is this the teaching of Scripture? Concerning a *matter so vital* to our everlasting happiness, it is of the deepest importance to us to obtain clear light from God Himself. Human opinion, if mistaken, will, if relied upon, involve our souls in irretrievable disaster. It is a remarkable fact, and interesting in connection with our present enquiry, that Peter, who is the pride and boast of all Sacramentalists, is at utter variance with them as to the two great subjects of

New birth and Priesthood. *He* teaches us that men are *born again by the incorruptible seed of the word of God*, new birth by means of baptism being utterly unknown to him; also he describes the whole body of believers as "a holy priesthood," a special priestly class clearly having no place in his thoughts. Let the reader carefully examine 1 Peter i. 23; ii. 4, 5.

"How and when do persons become children of God?" The question is authoritatively answered in John i. 12, 13: "*As many as received Him (the world-rejected Jesus), to them gave He the right to become children of God, even to them that believe on His name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God*" (Revised Version). There is no uncertain sound here. Not a syllable concerning sacramental grace; heart-contact with a living Person is the point insisted upon. The Son of God has been into this world; He has suffered for our redemption; and has gone up again on high. The world acknowledges Him not; "We will not have this Man to reign over us" is their cry to this hour (Luke xix. 14). Those who, in opposition to the world's opinion, open their hearts and receive Him, saying with Paul, "The Son of God loved me, and gave Himself for me," become forthwith children of God (Gal. ii. 20). A new life commences in their souls, of which the Holy Spirit is both the source and the power. Henceforward they are entitled to cry, "Abba, Father," they share the Son's own place in the Father's love, and the Father's house is their home and portion for ever. "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called children of God" (1 John iii. 1).

In Rom. viii. 16-21, the apostle twice speaks of his readers as "children of God." Have we any

certain means of knowing how the Christians in the Imperial city entered into this glorious relationship? We have. In the first chapter of the epistle we read: "I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world." Mark the language well, beloved reader. Not a word is said about submission to ordinances (precious as are both Baptism and the Lord's Supper in their right place); the secret of their blessedness is found in the two simple words "your faith." The Roman disciples believed in the Saviour who died for their sins and rose again, and their faith secured for them every good. Reader, could the apostle, if he were among us to-day, congratulate you upon "your faith"? Plead not pious deeds, works of benevolence, strict observance of religious ordinances, or anything else. All are absolutely worthless in the eyes of God if faith is lacking.

The writer of these few remarks was early trained to believe in sacramental grace, but the gracious Spirit of God opened his eyes in the year 1879 to see that with God nothing avails for the blessing of the soul but Christ and His atoning sacrifice. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts xvi. 31).

How to Become Children of God

By HENRY W. FIGGIS, Dublin.

"To as many as received Him, to them gave He the power to become children of God" (John i. 12).

THIS passage of Holy Scripture tells us in wonderfully simple language how a sinner may become a child of God.

We are not children of God by *natural* birth, but on the contrary are "children of wrath" (Eph. ii. 3). Nor do we become His children by virtue of baptism, or any other ordinance, for this would be according to the "will of man" (Jas. i. 13), but it is to those that receive Christ, God's own beloved Son, that He gives this high and magnificent privilege of becoming "children of God."

The salvation of the soul then is not secured by giving something TO God, or in doing something FOR God, but in "receiving" something FROM God : receiving, that is to say, God's gracious gift to lost sinners—the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

How may you become a child of God? by receiving the crucified, risen, and glorified Saviour as your own Saviour, His precious blood to cleanse your sins away, and His almighty arm to break the fetters of sin in which you are helplessly bound.

What is it to "receive" Christ? The verse tells us, it is to "believe on His name." His name stands for what He IS—His blessed Person, His finished, atoning sacrifice, His glorious offices, and everlasting love.

To *believe* on Him is to *receive* Him, and to *receive* Him is to *believe* on Him, and this is the *How* and the *When*.

How do I become a child of God? by receiving Christ. *When* do I become a child of God? *when* I believe on His dear Son.

But how comes it that so wonderful a change can be accomplished so rapidly and so simply? Because He, whom God is by His Gospel offering to sinners, is the One who perfectly glorified Him on this earth : fulfilled every jot and tittle of His law : finished the work that was given Him to do, and made an infinite atonement for sin by His precious blood shed on Calvary ; and because of

this perfect obedience unto death, God has highly exalted Him and set Him on the throne of the majesty in the heavens. "This is the true God and eternal life." This is the blessed One whom sinners are invited to "receive," on whose name they are called upon to believe, and through reception of whom they become possessors of eternal life. That an earthly monarch should offer a pauper a costly casket of purest gold, richly engraved and of priceless value, and this casket filled with precious stones and magnificent pearls, would indeed be a wonder; but what would that be in comparison with God's "UNSPEAKABLE GIFT," His holy, spotless, glorious Son, and *in Him* eternal life, pardon, cleansing, peace with God, and "more than tongue can tell" beside.

Reader, hast *thou* received this gift? If not, why not? Time is swiftly passing. Eternity is drawing fast onwards, and none but those who receive God's gift, and thus become His children, shall enter the Father's house above "in the sweet by and bye."

Many years have passed away since, as a youth in my nineteenth year, I accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as my own personal Saviour, and became a child of God. I had been religiously brought up, attended Sunday School from my childhood, and in due course had become a Sunday School teacher, was "confirmed" and admitted as a "communicant" to the Lord's Supper, and yet all the time was going down the broad road a Christless professor, unforgiven and in darkness. At last, through the mercy of God, I was awakened to see my need of a Saviour, and to understand that God's way of salvation was not *working* nor *waiting*, but *receiving*, and at last one night, after a simple Gospel meeting in a drawing-room, I remained for conversation, feeling a strong desire to have the

great matter of my soul's salvation settled. John iii. 36 settled it. I believed on the Lord Jesus, and received Him as my Saviour *without feeling*. Later on that night, in the quiet of my own room, Eph. i. 13 confirmed it, as I then discovered that those who believe on, and receive Christ, are sealed by God with His Holy Spirit, and that all inward peace and joy springs from this Divine seal and indwelling.

From that glad hour to this, God has graciously kept and led me, and given me much joy and blessing in His holy service, but never do I forget the first moment when I "received" Christ and became a child of God, and His Holy Spirit in my heart began to cry, Abba, Father.

Alas ! alas ! how many thousands there are around us bearing the name of "Christian," who have never been truly "born of God" ; nay, worse, who are "condemned already" as neglectors of His great salvation and rejecters of His beloved Son.

Oh ! reader, if thou art one of this unhappy number, open thine ears ; God speaks, aye, calls to thee. Turn from thy careless, foolish way, and listen to His gracious invitation : " If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved " (Rom. x. 9).

A Testimony from New Zealand

By FRANKLIN FERGUSON,

Editor of "The Treasury."

IT *is* by birth a person enters his father's family, and it is by the "*new birth*" he enters the family of God. "Blessed be the God and Father of our

Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy hath *begotten us again* " (1 Pet. i. 3). It is absolutely necessary, in order to be a child of God, that you shall have this experience at some time in your life ; otherwise you must perish. Hear the words of the Lord Jesus : " Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." "*Ye must be born again*" (John iii. 3-7).

People are not born Christians, although their birth should take place in what is called a Christian country, and their parents be professing or even real Christians. The truth of the matter is " I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me " (Ps. li. 5). " The wicked are estranged from the womb ; they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies." " The imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth " (Ps. lviii. 3 ; Gen. viii. 21).

There is an awful delusion in the minds of many people to-day that God is the Father of all, but this is not true, for in the Word of God two distinct classes are mentioned, viz., " the children of God " (Rom. viii. 16), and " the children of the wicked one " (Matt. xiii. 38). The Lord Jesus, to give another example, said to the Pharisees of His day, " Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do " (John viii. 44).

There is no salvation for the soul apart from faith in Christ ; " for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved " (Acts iv. 12). As to how faith comes, we read, "*Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God*" (Rom. x. 17). It is through hearing and believing the Gospel preached to us that we are "*born again*" and enter the family of God. The Gospel is " the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth " (Rom. i.

16). So you must hear the Gospel before you can believe it ; and you must believe it before you can become a child of God.

Baptism, the Lord's Supper, and religious ordinances, were never given as means of salvation, but for the obedience of those only who are the children of God. Eternal life can only come from God, and ceremonies cannot possibly impart it. "THE GIFT OF GOD is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. vi. 23) ; "not of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph. ii. 9).

After the Lord Jesus had been crucified and raised again from the dead, "having obtained eternal redemption for us" (Heb. ix. 12), He ascended to heaven and "sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high" (Heb. i. 3). Then the Holy Spirit of God came down from heaven to "convict the world in respect of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment" (John xvi. 8, R.V.). Have you ever been convicted of sin? and have you ever seen yourself a lost sinner in danger of hell fire? If not, then you need to, for until you are so convicted the Saviour is nothing to you, for He says, "I came not to call the righteous (people who suppose themselves righteous), but *sinner*s to repentance" (Mark ii. 17). There is a Saviour only for lost sinners.

Listen to what God says of those who "die without Christ." "The angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire" (Matt. xiii. 49, 50) ; "and these shall go away into everlasting punishment" (Matt. xxv. 46), "where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched" (Mark ix. 44). "The smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever : and they have no rest day nor night" (Rev. xiv. 11).

But listen also to this: "Christ died for our sins" (1 Cor. xv. 3); "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed" (Isa. liii. 5). "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved" (Acts xvi. 31). "As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the children of God, even to them that believe on His name" (John i. 12). It is only thus you can be born again, and become consciously a child of God.

From childhood I had godly parents who early taught me the way of life and ceased not to pray for my conversion to God. I had every advantage a Christian home could afford, but stubborn facts were these: On November 22, 1866, I was born a sinner, inheriting a fallen nature, which no power of man could change. All the parental care and training could not of itself make white that which was by nature black. But it pleased God in October, 1881, to awaken my soul to a sense of its lost condition, using the truth of the Lord's coming for His people as the means to this end. I saw they would be taken and I should be left. Ah, it came as a very real thing to my soul, and the thought of being in hell for ever came as a terrible reality. On October 31, 1881, I saw the simplicity of salvation in John iii. 16, and trusted my all for time and eternity on the Son of God who died for me. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

Not Evolution but Regeneration

By W. FULLER GOOCH, London.

OUR Divine Lord said "Ye must be born again." Nothing therefore can take the place of the New Birth. As a well known author puts it, "No organic change, no moral effort, no evolution of character, no progress of civilisation can endow any single human soul with spiritual life." Some have declared that life is the result of evolution, not of Divine creation ; and the doctrine applied to the existence of this world, and to the existence of the life of man upon it, has been brought into the doctrines of Christianity, and a large number of teachers of Christianity to-day assert that it is not the Divine regeneration of which our Lord speaks which makes a Christian, but it is an evolution of life through educational forces, and through various environments, that makes men the acceptable children of God. But there has not been a man of science found yet who can give one single illustration of life spontaneously begotten in anything that was destitute of it. No, nor has there been a single proved illustration of one species even being transferred into another species—not a single proof of it the wide world over. And the most modern science is reverting back to the old position, that so far from Darwin's theory being right, it must be admitted that there is a force behind life which has not yet been discovered, but which, being greater in itself than the life given, is the origin of life. That is where the Scriptures have always placed it, and our best men of science are rapidly coming back to it, because they find the old position

of Darwin will not stand. And so in the circle of Christian truth men are teaching that there is an evolutionary process by which a man can be born again—by which he can become a child of God. But you cannot show a single illustration of it, not one; it is only by the Divine power, as we have already seen, that this can be brought about. And so this manifestation of Divine power, this Divine work called Regeneration, is indispensable. Unless you experience it, you will die instead of live. Unless you experience it, you will go into darkness instead of into light. Unless a man be born from above, he cannot see, much less enter the kingdom of God, said Christ.

We read in John i. 12, 13: "But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name, which were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." Mark the words: "*not of blood.*" If you notice the marginal reference, you will see the word is in the plural, it is "not of bloods." We might translate it and indicate the same thought if we say, It is not a physical matter, or one of nationality or race. It matters not what blood runs through the veins of a man or any set of men; it is not of that. You may be born of Jewish or other privileged race, but you will not be born of God because of that. You may be born in so-called Christian lands, but it won't make you a Christian; it is not of blood. Nor is it "*of the will of the flesh.*" Christ said to Nicodemus, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh," and you cannot get anything else out of it. So the new birth is not of the flesh. And it is not of "*the will of man.*" You may desire the regeneration of your friend, your child, or anyone with whom you have to do, but

your will wont determine it. No, nor will any other human will determine it. It is not in the power of the human will; a man's own selfwill cannot determine it. It is not of these things, but of God. I repeat, it is not of the will of man. The human priest comes on the scene, and by some species of jugglery he will try to persuade you that he can perform this mystery of regeneration. He will take a helpless child and sprinkle upon it some water, and make, it may be, the sign of the cross, and declare the child regenerate. It is the greatest piece of delusion that could be palmed off upon a credulous world; it is the most monstrous falsehood that can be told in the name of religion, that any rite or ceremony regenerates. No priest can regenerate, no priestly rite can give the new birth. It is **not** of the will of man, be he priest or not priest; it comes not that way. *It is by the will of God.* This is the uniform teaching of Scripture, and Scripture alone is the arbiter of truths affecting salvation and life. Our Lord put it to Nicodemus that he "must be born from above"—from above, not from anything down here, or of men.

In the first Epistle of John, you have seven times the expression "born of God" or "begotten of God." The truth is, that the power of "the flesh," by which man in his natural condition is held, is so mighty, so fearfully strong, that nothing short of the power of God can overcome it. Oh, that men saw that! They think that sin is a very light matter indeed, but the power of sin is unconquerable, so far as all human resources are concerned. The power of the world is equally so, while the power of Satan, which lies behind both, is also superhuman, and, apart from Divine grace, invincible. This fearful trinity of evil—the world, the flesh, and the devil—has sway over all men by nature,

consequently nothing less than the power of the Divine Spirit can rescue a man from it, and implant in his heart a principle capable of resisting it, capable of flinging it off and getting victory over it for the rest of his days. Truly may we say—

“ How helpless guilty nature lies,

Unconscious of its load !

The heart unchanged can never rise

To happiness and God.”

Let us look at the different phases of this truth that the source of regeneration is a Divine one, and a Divine one only. First of all, it is said to be, as one passage states, *Of the will of God as the determining force of it*. Suppose there is a soul reading these words not regenerate, not born again. Suppose some such soul becomes regenerate, and is born again ; it is the will of God that brings that about. And when we say that, what a blessed Gospel truth is asserted ! Just think of it—the God who has been resisted, displeased, fought against ; the God whose just and righteous law has been broken, whose righteous condemnation hangs over the head of every unbeliever ; the God who could easily crush and righteously drive out from His presence the rebellious one, wills it otherwise, and works to that end. “ He is long-suffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.” And that is what regeneration means in every case. It means a gracious will of God concerning the soul, as the result of which the soul, wrought upon by the Divine Spirit, is rescued from death and brought into spiritual life. Second, *It is of the abundant mercy of God as the fount of it*. May I call to your minds the words of Peter ? You will find them in his first Epistle, chapter i., verse 3 : “ Blessed

be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, *which according to His abundant mercy* hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." It is abundant mercy which is the source of regeneration. As Paul, in describing his own case, said, "The grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant toward me."

Another aspect. *It is the result of the Word of God as the Divine instrument.* Take the Apostle Peter again: "Born again *of the Word of God*, the incorruptible seed which liveth and abideth for ever." Dear friends, some people preach the doctrine of regeneration as though it stood like a great mountain between the poor sinner and God, and as though the sinner might say, if he thought seriously about it, "There is no hope for me unless God breaks this great mountain down; I do not know whether He will regenerate me, I do not know whether I shall be born of Him and made His child; and if God is not willing, and does not do it, there is no hope for me." That is true enough, but that is not how the Gospel presents the subject. The Gospel, as I have already said, intimates that God is willing, and the Gospel of His grace which He commands to be preached, not to a special class of people, but to every creature—that Gospel is preached as the instrument or means by which this may be brought about; and when it is faithfully preached in the power of the Spirit it just goes to men's hearts, enlightens men's minds, draws men toward it, and impresses them and inclines them to consider the great matter, and in this way the Spirit works regeneration. It is by the preaching of the Gospel, which is God's earnest, sincere, loving message to me and to every man or woman who receives or hears it. It is not regenera-

tion first, and then the Gospel, but it is the Gospel first, and then regeneration ; but theories and systems have reversed God's order, and they have said, First regeneration, and then the Gospel. Not so. The Gospel first, that the Spirit may work regeneration by the means of it. When Christ preached the doctrine of the New Birth to Nicodemus after He said, "Ye must be born again," He went on to show Nicodemus that as Moses lifted up the brazen serpent in the wilderness, and those who looked upon it were healed of their wounds, so, says Christ, "I, the Son of Man, am to be lifted up ; I am going to die, I am going to give My life a ransom for many, that whosoever believeth on Me may receive"—what? "Might not perish, but have *everlasting life*." And that is regeneration. As though He said, "Nicodemus, if you want regeneration—and I have told you you must perish without it, you cannot enter the kingdom without it—if you want it, then just as your forefathers looked at the brazen serpent in the wilderness and received new life, so you must look to Me, the Son of Man sent to die for you and rise again ; and if you believe on Me, as they believed about the serpent, you shall have regeneration and eternal life." They are inseparable ; the Gospel and the New Birth go together. It is by the Word of God as the Divine instrument, then, and by the Spirit of God as the mighty agent, that this great work is accomplished. And then it is by the Son of God as the source of the life which the Holy Ghost implants within the new-born soul—the risen life of Christ, not something as the result of the risen life of Christ, but the internal principle of life which the Holy Ghost implants in regeneration, so that it is "Christ in you the hope of glory."

Man's Fall, God's Deliverance

By JOHN GILL, Boston, Mass., U.S.A.

THE twofold question "How and When" clearly implies, if it does not plainly state *the fact*, that all persons are not the children of God. Now *this fact* needs to be stated distinctly, repeated emphatically, and reiterated dogmatically, because of a very common notion that persons born in so-called Christian countries are therefore Children of God.

There is another view just as void of truth as this one—are we not all God's creatures and of course His children? Hence comes the formula so common now—"I believe in the Fatherhood of God, and the Brotherhood of man." Others again because of their upbringing and training, have been constrained to become church members, and consider themselves therefore Children of God. Now all this is not only a mistake but a fatal mistake. The Lord Jesus said "Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John iii. 3), and the reason for this, in verse 6, is emphatic—"that which is born of the flesh is flesh." "*Ye must be born again.*" Now because of this, and in connection with our subject, I would remind my readers of a statement, which old though it be, is needed truth for the present time, I mean the statement of truth known sometimes as "the three Rs"—

1st, Ruin by the fall in Adam.

2nd, Redemption through the Lord Jesus Christ.

3rd, Regeneration by the Holy Spirit.

These doctrines are fundamental and indispensable I will therefore look at our subject in two aspects.

1st, *Man as God's creature in the beginning.*

2nd, *Man now as fallen and lost, dealt with by God in grace.*

1st, Man viewed as God's creature in the beginning. In Gen. i. 26, 27 we read "God made man in His own image and likeness." Some say that this image consisted in love, truth and holiness. Others that Adam was so formed as to be able to recognize the mind and will of God above him, with an understanding to know and a will to love his creator. Again in the Shorter Catechism we read "God made man in His own image, in knowledge, righteousness and holiness with dominion over the creatures." I am satisfied that in this we have the truth, if not the whole truth. Man in innocence endowed with all these faculties, capable of enjoying fellowship with God, and as His creature owing Him obedience, confidence, and dependence.

2nd, Man as God's creature, fallen, but under grace. In Genesis 3rd chapter, we see Man in disobedience, distrust, and independence. What a change in so short a time ! He is now no longer capable of fellowship with God. By disobedience he has become a rebel, fallen and lost, as well as dead to all that was so precious and blessed before. With increased knowledge trouble has come, and innocency with dominion have gone. Still, as the late William Reid put it, "Man as ever owes to God obedience, confidence, and dependence," but, alas ! he is now both unable and unwilling to yield them.

This is how our race by lawlessness and self-will became sinners, or, as we have it in Rom. v. 12 : "By one man sin entered into the world, and death

by sin, so that death has passed upon all men for that all have sinned."

But God is "rich in mercy" (Eph. ii. 4), and "willeth not that any should perish" (2 Pet. iii. 9). He could find no righteous satisfaction in "the blood of bulls and of goats, which could not take away sin" (Heb. x. 1-10), and so provided a sufficient sacrifice Himself, One "mighty to save," even the Lord Jesus Christ—"the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world" (John i. 29). God has concluded all under sin (Gal. iii. 22), and shut all up in unbelief that He might have mercy upon all (Rom. ii. 32).

The late W. P. MacKay said: "When man was tried in innocence, his independence was seen, that is sin as to his will; tried under conscience his corruption was seen, that is sin as to his heart; tried under law his transgression was seen, that is sin as to commandment; tried under grace his enmity was seen, that is sin as to a person."

What an awful description of man, a self-willed, vile rebel in lawless opposition and enmity against God his maker (Rom. viii. 7, 8; Matt. xxi. 38). But now we see "God in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them" (2 Cor. v. 19). "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John iii. 16). Any poor rebel sinner, who accepts or believes God's testimony as to his condition and need, lost, helpless, ungodly enemy though he be, and receives Christ by believing on Him, becomes that instant a child of God (Rom. v. 6-10; John i. 12).

In the year 1860 I was convinced by the Word and Spirit of God of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment (John xvi. 8-11), and also "that by the

deeds of the law no flesh could be justified in His sight" (Rom. iii. 20, 21). I then saw that "Christ was the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth" (Rom. x. 4); that God had made Him, who knew no sin, to be sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him (2 Cor. v. 21). I then believed the record that God gave of His Son: "And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life."

A Miracle of Divine Grace

By JAMES M. GRAY, D.D.,

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I WAS a member of a Christian household, and brought up in a Christian family—nominally so, at least.

My life as a boy was moral and obedient, and I regularly attended church. At fourteen years of age, when I knew "the creed, the Lord's prayer, and the ten commandments," I was "confirmed in the most holy faith" by a bishop of my church; and was taught in my catechism that I had then become "a child of God, a member of Christ, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven."

But this I do not now believe, nor have I believed it since I was converted.

That happy event took place about seven or eight years after my confirmation. I had passed my majority, and already had my face turned toward the Christian ministry, not as a divine calling but a human profession, before I really knew Jesus Christ, or was saved. And I can not but believe

that had I died during the intervening period, moral youth that I was, and church-member besides, I should have died in my sins.

My conversion was like this: I was reading a book—did space permit, I should like to describe the exceeding unlikely circumstance that I should have been reading that book at such a time, but it was part of the mysterious and unmerited favour of God to me. The author was Rev. William Arnot, of Edinburgh, and the title, “Laws from Heaven for Life on Earth.” It was a series of brief homilies upon the book of Proverbs, addressed to young men. For my Bible I did not care, but this book had a strong attraction for me.

On a memorable night, in the quiet of my own room, after an exciting evening among worldly people, my eye fell on this sentence: “*Every soul not already won to Jesus is already lost.*”

It was an arrow of conviction to my soul. Quicker than I can express it, an overwhelming sense of my lost and hopeless condition fell upon me. I knew that I was not won to Jesus, and yet I knew that I ought to be. There was nothing in my life, professedly Christian and outwardly clean as it was, to indicate that I belonged to Him, or that He possessed or controlled me. Hell seemed open to receive me, and my soul was hanging over the abyss. I was condemned, and realised the justness of the condemnation. I had absolutely no plea, but mercy.

Daily had I said my “prayers” since childhood, but that night, like Saul of Tarsus, I *prayed*. The prayer of the publican came to me, the prayer the blessed Saviour placed upon my lips: “*God be merciful to me a sinner!*” I am not ashamed to say that in agony I uttered it with my face upon the floor.

And God heard it. He always hears that prayer. He put the everlasting arm under me that night. He lifted me out of the miry clay, and planted me upon a rock, and established my goings. He put a new song in my mouth, which I have been singing ever since, even salvation unto my God !

Logically, as the result of this experience, I believe souls are saved only by the regenerating grace of God, and that salvation comes to them when penitently they cast themselves on the divine mercy as exemplified in the work of our Lord Jesus Christ. I believe, too, that men *know* when they are saved. Not that they are able always to give the date or the attending circumstances, but that in one way or another it will be manifest that "if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2 Cor. v. 18).

We turn our back upon our old habits, our old haunts, and our old companions of the world. We begin to take an interest in the Word and work of God. We have a sense of great relief, not only in the thought of futurity, but the working together for good of all things in the present time. We have peace, and happiness, and rest inexplicable on other grounds. Beyond all, we have the sure word of God to lean upon, feeling or no feeling (John v. 24).

Neither morality nor human righteousness can produce this ; a profession of Christianity does not produce it ; the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper do not produce it ; church membership does not produce it ; acts of kindness and benevolence do not produce it. Nothing but the reception of a new nature through faith in Christ produces it. And this is a miracle of divine grace. But miracle as it is, God works it in the life of

every man when he receives Jesus Christ as his Saviour, and through Him obtains authority to become a son of God (John i. 12).

I spoke of my experience as teaching this, but it is the Word of God that teaches it, and my experience simply bears witness to its truth.

Is Your Name Written There ?

By W. HOSTE, B.A., London

"WHEN Israel came out of Egypt," they were accompanied by "a mixed multitude" (margin, "a great mixture"), not of the true stock of Abraham (Exod. xii. 38). It was necessary, therefore, later on, when Moses took the census of all qualified to go forth "to war in Israel" (Num. i. 3), that each professed Israelite should prove his claim, "by declaring his pedigree after his family, by the house of his fathers" (Num. i. 18). The same practice was observed at the return from the Babylonish captivity. All who wished to be enrolled as true-born Israelites had "to shew their father's house and their seed, whether they were of Israel." Six hundred and fifty-two persons failed to do so at the last moment, and were excluded. In addition to these, there were some who even professed to be priests of the Lord, but profession was not enough, they had to substantiate their claim by exhibiting their pedigree. Of them we read the solemn words, "*These sought their register among those that were reckoned by genealogy, but they were not found, therefore were they, as polluted, put from the priesthood*" (Ezra ii. 59-62). How dire must have been their disappointment, how sad their confusion, at finding themselves thus shut out from the

national privileges! But who can portray the dismay and terror of those who will fail to find their names written in the Book of life? Of such, the Word of God declares: "Whosoever was not found written in the Book of life, was cast into the lake of fire" (Rev. xx. 12-15).

How important then to make sure whether or no we do truly belong to the family of God! We cannot afford to make a mistake here.

Let us then first be quite clear that we were not born into the world children of God. The words of David, "Behold I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me" (Ps. li. 5), apply with equal force to all born of woman, except indeed to our blessed Lord, who was from birth, as always, the Holy One of God. But with this exception, we are all "by nature children of wrath" (Eph. ii. 3). All who reach the age of responsibility become by practice "sons of disobedience" (ver. 2), and all become sooner or later in character, unless the grace of God intervenes, "sons of the devil." This last phrase is never in Scripture applied to new-born babes, but rather to those who by obstinate rejection of the light become morally conformed to him who was "A murderer from the beginning"—men like the religious Jews, who sought to slay the Lord (John viii. 44), or like Elymas who would fain have destroyed the soul of Paulus by turning him from the faith (Acts xiii. 8).

A child then is born into the world *sintul* as to nature, *lost* as to condition, and *dead* to God as to spiritual relation, and becoming, when able to "discern between his right hand and his left hand" (Jonah iv. 11), morally *responsible* to God and *guilty* before Him. Men boast of their genealogical descent. Did they but go back far

enough, they would discover, as has been said, that their first parents were thieves and their eldest brother a murderer. Christian parents are responsible to "bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. vi. 4), and, like Eunice of old, to store their young memories with "the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make them wise unto salvation through FAITH which is in Christ Jesus." But they cannot communicate to them at birth their own new spiritual nature, for "that which is born of the flesh is flesh," nor by any process educational or ecclesiastical can they afterwards turn them into children of God.

When I was a few weeks old, I was christened according to the rites of the Church of England. I knew nothing of it of course at the time, but I was afterwards informed of the fact, and also given the Catechism to learn, which told me that in my baptism I had been made "a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven." I have no doubt that this teaching is a relic of popery, which our English Reformers, great champions of certain truths as they were, failed to eliminate from "the prayer book." My parents were both staunch Evangelicals, and had a horror of baptismal regeneration, that dangerous doctrine which is perhaps lulling to sleep more souls in Christendom than any other single invention of the Evil One. Accordingly, though they gave me the Catechism to learn, they, with blessed inconsistency, impressed on me the fact that I must come to the Lord Jesus by a personal faith, if ever I was to become a child of God. Later on I was confirmed by the late Dr Ellicott, Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol, as the diocese then was. I was told to expect a blessing on the ordinance. I earnestly sought it, but in vain. There was no rite which

could make me a child of God, nor yet my prayers; Bible-reading, or attendance at "Holy Communion." I was aware that something was wrong: I did not know that *all* was wrong. I was quite sure I needed improvement: I did not know that I needed to be "born again." It was to the exemplary Nicodemus of Jerusalem, not to the open sinner of Samaria, that our Lord addressed the solemn words, "*Ye must be born again.*" Nicodemus was a specimen of man at his best, but was, for all that, only a son of the fallen family of Adam. He was religious, respectable, and even a believer in the divine mission of Jesus of Nazareth, but, nevertheless, as incapable of entering the kingdom of God as a Zaccheus or a Magdalene. He had physical, mental, and moral life in a high degree, but he had not the life from above necessary for the enjoyment of a heavenly sphere. Let us suppose an illustration. I take a lark, bred in some dark London slum, and let it out in a grassy meadow, bright with the flowers of June. Such surroundings would be entirely new, but the bird would be at home, for its nature would be suited to its new environment—it would already possess meadow-life. The next day I take to that same meadow a freshly caught mackerel. The fish has more life and energy of a certain kind than the bird, but what was health to the one is death to the other. The mackerel would be out of harmony with grass and bluebells, for it would not possess meadow-life. Now to apply the illustration. Usher the feeblest child of God into heaven—"stranger he in courts above"—but he has a nature that is at home with God, he possesses heavenly life.

Now let us stand by the death-bed of some great dignitary of the professing Church—a man perhaps of blameless reputation, of highest theological attain-

ment, one whose life had been spent in religious rites and ceremonies, and suppose he had never been "born from above" (a by no means impossible supposition seeing it was just such a type of man that crucified the Lord), he could be no more at home in heaven than a mackerel in a meadow. Alas! our Lord had to say to the religious teachers of His time—the Pharisees and Sadducees corresponding respectively to the Ritualist (Roman or Anglican) and the Rationalist (religious or profane) of our day—"the publicans and the harlots shall enter the kingdom of heaven before you." The first condition for blessing is the humble and the contrite heart. It is not the man who justifies himself and despises others who will get the blessing, but the man who "justifies God" and cries from his heart, "God be propitiated to me a sinner" (Luke xviii. 13, R.V., margin). To such an one the answer comes, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life." "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." By the mercy of God I was at length brought down thus before Him and enabled through the word of the Lord, contained in Romans vi. 23, "The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord," to cast myself wholly upon Him as my Saviour.

There are those who teach that a man is born again, as soon as he begins to be anxious about salvation. I believe this is a grave mistake. The first work of the Spirit on a soul is not to communicate life but to convict of sin. The word of God connects becoming a child of God with believing on the Son of God. It was at the moment that I looked up to God and believed on the Lord Jesus, and not till then, that I became a child of

God. Much has been said as to children being brought by baptism or dedication into a "circle of privilege": but the only circle of privilege in this dispensation of grace has a diameter of 7000 miles, if one may so say, that is as broad as the world, for the parting words of our Lord were, "Go into *all the world* and preach the Gospel to *every creature*." Into this circle every child enters by its birth. It is no doubt a great boon for a child to have Christian parents, for then it can be trained "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord," but this does not consist in making the child believe that it has been already regenerated in some mysterious way without knowing it, but in teaching it "the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make it wise unto salvation (not without faith) but *through faith* which is in Christ Jesus."

In conclusion, I would point out five important facts in connection with the new birth:

1. *God is the Author of it.* It cannot be worked up, it must come down. As James writes to his fellow-believers, "Of His own will begat He us with the word of truth" (James i. 18).

2. *The Holy Spirit is the Agent of it.* "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John iii. 1-5). It is the Holy Spirit who communicates life to the dead soul.

3. *The Word is the instrument of it.* "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God" (1 Pet. i. 23). The Word of God testifies to us of the blessed Person and work of Christ, by the reception of whom we become children of God. Whatever the expression "of water" (lit. "out of water") in John iii. 5 may mean, it cannot here, as some affirm, indicate Christian baptism. A reference

to this ordinance *then* would have been an anachronism, seeing that our Lord did not institute the rite till after His resurrection. How could Nicodemus understand the meaning of that which did not then exist? But what our Lord refers to here, was something His questioner ought to have understood that very night on which he sought the Lord.

4. *The Lord Jesus is the medium* through whom the new birth comes. It is not by looking to ourselves or our sins that we get the new life, but by looking by faith to Him dying on the cross for us and for our sins. Behold the Lamb of God! See Him there meeting all the claims of a Holy God against the sinner! and suffering "the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God" (1 Pet. iii. 18).

5. *Faith is the means* by which a sinner receives the gift of the new life. In order to experience this great change, it is not needful for a man to pass through strange emotions, to dream startling dreams, nor to spend hours in prayer; it is needful for him to believe in his heart in the Lord Jesus as his own personal Saviour. Faith is the hand that accepts the proffered gift—the principle by which we begin, continue, and end the Christian life, the power "that worketh by love." Thank God, this is not intended to be the experience of the few. God in His all-embracing love "sent His Son . . . that the *world* through Him might be saved" (John iii. 17), and the word in John i. 12 is, to the glory of His grace, "To as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become children of God, even to them that believe on His name."

Beloved, now are we the sons of God

By S. R. HENRY, Belfast.

THE passage at the head of this paper contains eight words; and the first one is by no means the least significant. As far as the Sacred Record is concerned, a certain class of people monopolise that word. Not even once, throughout the entire range of Scripture, are men and women in their natural condition addressed as "beloved." John calls those to whom he is writing, "beloved," because they are in the same family as himself; or, in other words, because they have the same Father. They are in fact his brethren. As far as equals are concerned, no relation can be closer than that of brother to brother, or sister to sister, or sister to brother. Did these endearing relations always exist? Certainly not. At the moment when the Apostle was writing, they had been all gathered into the Divine family circle; but there was a time when this gathering was not an accomplished fact. There was a time when all these living children were simply dead souls. "You hath He quickened," says Paul, "who were dead in trespasses and sins." The idea of bringing a corpse into a family group is a very revolting one; and we may say without hesitation that in the spiritual sphere it is as impossible, as revolting. There is no dead soul in the family of God; and, as in Adam all died, so all those who are in Adam, and not in Christ, are outside the only happy circle in the world. This disposes of the whole unregenerate mass of humanity. Not a single one of these can say that God is his Father without saying what is untrue. They are outsiders, strangers, and aliens; "having no hope, and with-

out God in the world." Nor can the stranger to God quote with any advantage to himself the verse in Isaiah which says: "But now, O Lord, Thou art our Father; we are the clay, and Thou our potter; and we all are the work of Thy hands" (chap. lxiv. 8). This refers to the *creation of Israel as the chosen people*. There is no spiritual paternity in the passage. If, however, it were true that we have God for our natural Father, we could not be adopted by Him at all. No parent ever adopts his own child, nor could he do so, even if he tried. The sentimental, man-pleasing preacher is in the habit of proclaiming such fictions as these: "Poor, sinful wanderer, come home. God is your Father." Within the same hour we may hear him contradicting his own words. He contrives to do this by reading from the New Testament the text that represents the saints as having received *the adoption of sons*: forgetting that by giving them a Father and a good one in their natural condition, he has put adoption altogether out of the question. The Bible teaches us that as we come into the world, we have no spiritual home, and no Holy Father. If we are to have spiritual life, we must be BORN AGAIN, even if we happen to be well on in years: *these two things always go together*. "To as many as received Him, to them gave He power (the right) to become the children of God: even to them that believe on His name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." Thus the question, "Am I a child of God?" resolves itself into this one: "Am I born again?" But to be made a child of God is to be made safe: therefore the question, "What must I do to be born into the household of God?" resolves itself into the most solemn of all queries, "What must I do to be

saved?" But Paul says to the Galatian saints, "Ye are all the sons of God, by faith in Christ Jesus"; which just amounts to the glad assurance that we are all brought into the safe place of the family of God by exercising faith in His Son. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you become a member of the household of faith, an heir of God, a joint-heir with Christ, and an inheritor of everlasting blessedness.

We proceed now to put the reader on his guard against two false ideas of the most dangerous kind. The first one takes this form: *No one can know whether he is saved or not.* This really amounts to the declaration that no one can know whether he has believed in the Son of God or not: for he that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life. But if you don't know whether you have believed unto life eternal, you don't know whether you have obeyed God's command or not, which really is an absurdity. For how could God command you to believe if it were impossible for you to know whether you had done so or not. It is to be feared that this is too often a false excuse for going on in unbelief.

The second mistake takes something of the following form: *No one can be sure whether he has trusted the Lord Jesus in the right way or not.* Your statement amounts to this, that there are a great many ways of trusting Jesus Christ for salvation, and that you don't know whether or not yours is the right one. Apply this "difficulty" to real life. For example, you enter into a railway carriage at a certain place, and you thereby trust the engine-driver to convey you to the station mentioned on your ticket. How do you know that you are trusting him "in the right way?" You can soon settle this point for yourself. Take a pencil and

make out a careful list of the various ways in which it is possible for a passenger to trust an engine-driver to bring him to his destination. Try it, and you will find that there is but one way of trusting the engine-driver to convey your body: and there is only one way of trusting the Lord Jesus to save your soul. There is no right way and wrong way of "trusting" anybody for anything. *You are either trusting in the right way, or you are not trusting at all.*

In conclusion, we bring forward a single fact which testifies in the strongest manner to the truth of these doctrines. The writer had on one occasion twenty-three communicants coming forward for the first time. All testified that they were saved, and *twenty-two out of the twenty-three* told the minister and session, before whom they were examined, *the day and date* in which they had passed from death unto life.

Not by works of righteousness which we have done

By C. F. HOGG, London

BEFORE answering this question as to how to become a child of God, we must ask and answer another, namely, Are not all men children of God in virtue of their creation? For it is commonly assumed that though some may be disobedient, or even as far off as the prodigal, nevertheless all mankind are children of God and partake naturally of the Divine nature. In support of this opinion appeal is made to the words of the Apostle Paul at Athens: "He made of one every nation of men for to dwell on

Throughout this article the Revised Version is quoted.

all the face of the earth ; that they should seek God, if haply they might feel after Him, and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us ; for in Him we live and move and have our being ; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we also are His offspring " (Acts xvii. 26-29).

Being then the offspring of God, man is responsible to render to God gratitude, obedience, and reverence as the creature to the Creator. This responsibility ever remains, but is a widely different thing from being related to Him as children in the vital sense in which the Word of God speaks of it.

But it is also true that men have by disobedience forfeited that communion with God which was theirs by virtue of creation, and if communion is to be restored to them, they must be born anew.

The Apostle John asserts that " the whole world lieth in the Evil One " (1 John v. 19, and the Apostle Paul speaks of himself and all men as being by nature " children of wrath," " dead through their trespasses and sins " (Eph. ii. 1-3), and as " being alienated from the life of God " (Eph. iv. 18).

Now no man who has read the Bible and judged himself by its light will be surprised that the Lord Jesus should say, " Ye must be born again " (John iii. 7).

Not all, indeed, are gross sinners, not all are evil livers, thieves, fornicators, or murderers, but however moral a man may be, however deservedly respected by those who know them, it is still true that all have turned " every one to his own way " (Isa. liii. 6), that is to say, each man by nature seeks to enjoy his own life and to fulfil his own destiny apart from God.

The Pharisees of whom we read in the Gospels were many of them honest men, clean livers, upright and moral in their human relationships, yet, for all

their careful regard to the ceremonials of religion, they were, in heart, strangers to God. So it is with the religious people of our day: a man may be regular in attendance at and liberal in his gifts to the church to which he is attached by birth or by choice, and yet know nothing whatever of communion with God. Such an one was Nicodemus, evidently, from what we read of him in the Gospels, a man of irreproachable personal character, and more than that a religious man, nay, even a teacher of religion (John iii. 10), and yet it was to this man of all others that the Lord Jesus said, "*Ye must be born anew*," that is to say men must be lifted out of the old creation into which they entered by natural birth, and which since the Fall of Adam is held in "the bondage of corruption" (Rom. viii. 20, 21); and be brought into the New Creation of which Christ is the Head (2 Cor. v. 17). In the old or natural life there is no spiritual power and no hope of salvation. By the new birth men are brought into a new life in Christ which can never fail.

Twice over Nicodemus asked How? The Lord Jesus in His reply reminded him of a familiar incident in the history of Israel. The people were disobedient in the wilderness, and God punished them by sending deadly serpents among them. When they cried to God for deliverance, He commanded Moses to make a serpent of brass and to raise it on a pole, promising that every bitten Israelite who looked at this brazen serpent would be immediately healed. "And," continued the Lord Jesus, "as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth may in Him have eternal life" (John iii. 14, 15). Now it is quite clear that just as natural birth is the entrance upon natural

life, so the *new birth* is the entrance upon eternal life, in which we are said to "have our redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses according to the riches of His grace" (Eph. i. 7), and to be "blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ" (Eph. i. 3).

Here, then, is the answer to the question, How a man may be *born anew* (John iii. 14). "Whosoever believeth," or, as the Lord Jesus said more fully on a later occasion, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth My word, and believeth Him that sent Me, hath eternal life, and shall not come into judgment, but hath passed out of death into life" (John v. 24). This plain, simple, unmistakable answer comes to us from the highest authority, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. And with it agree the words of the Apostle Paul, "Ye are all sons of God, through faith in Christ Jesus" (Gal. iii. 26), and the words of the Apostle Peter, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy begat us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, unto an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away" (1 Pet. i. 3, 4), and, a little further on, "having been begotten again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, through the word of God, which liveth and abideth" (ver. 23).

The other question, *When?* is also clearly answered in the Bible. The Lord Jesus said, "He that believeth hath eternal life" (John vi. 47), and "He that believeth hath passed out of death into life," plainly a possession into which a man enters, which becomes his from the moment he believes. And the testimony of the Apostle Paul agrees with this. "In whom (*i.e.*, in Christ) ye also, having heard the word of the truth, the gospel

of your salvation, in whom, having also believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise" (Eph. i. 13). The Apostle John bears witness to the same truth, "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is begotten of God" (1 John v. 1), and, "he that hath the Son hath the life; he that hath not the Son of God hath not the life" (1 John v. 12), and, "Beloved, now are we the children of God" (1 John iii. 2). Indeed, this was the very purpose the Apostle had in mind when he wrote the Gospel that bears his name, "These are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that, believing, ye may have life in His name." Thus it is confidently affirmed on the authority of Holy Scripture that when a man believes on the Lord Jesus Christ, he passes from death unto life, he is born anew. And, moreover, it is affirmed on the same authority that when a man becomes a child of God he should know that it is so. According to the words of the same writer, "These things have I written unto you that ye may *know* that ye have *eternal life*, even unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God" (1 John v. 12, 13), and the words of the Apostle Paul, "The Spirit Himself beareth witness with our spirit that we are children of God" (Rom. viii. 16).

In conclusion, the writer would put his own experience on record. Seven and twenty years ago, without premeditation on his part, and without premonition of impending change, the preaching of the Gospel worked conviction of sin in his heart. Thereupon, knowing his danger and need of a Saviour, he turned to the Lord Jesus Christ, and believing in Him, was *born anew*, and so became a child of God, and in this assurance he has rejoiced ever since. Nor does the writer lay claim to any

merit, or credit of any kind whatever. A sinner whose sole hope is in Christ he is glad to say daily, "Unto Him that loveth us, and loosed us from our sins in His blood; to Him be the glory and the dominion for ever. Amen" (Rev. i. 5, 6).

The New Birth All Important

By T. SHULDHAM HENRY, M.A., LL.B., London.

BORN once, die twice; born twice, die once. There are two births, there are two deaths—the natural birth and the spiritual birth, the natural death and the spiritual death. If a man has only been born once, the natural birth, and dies in that state, he dies twice; the body dies, becomes food for worms, and the soul dies, which is eternal separation from God. If a man has been born twice, spiritually as well as naturally, he only dies once, the natural death, the death of the body, if the Lord delays His coming. Over him the second death has no power. By birth man is introduced into the earthly family. By birth he *must* also be introduced into the heavenly. "*Ye must be born again.*" Dear friend, how do matters stand between you and God? Have you been born again, born twice, "born of God," "born from above"? (see margin). Are you a member of the royal family of heaven? Are you a child of God, a son, a daughter of the Lord God Almighty? The Lord is very emphatic about this, yea, very dogmatic, "*Ye must be born again.*"

It comes to this: Unless you are born of God, converted to God, you *shall not* enter into the kingdom. Jesus says it, who has power to keep you out. He does not say, "Ye must not, ye may not." He says, "Ye shall not, ye cannot." Hearken to

Him. See that ye refuse not Him that speaks from heaven.

Again, the new birth is all-important, because without it there is no introduction into the heavenly family. "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot *enter into* the kingdom of God" (ver. 5). A child by baptism, or, rather, water sprinkling, may be introduced into the outward professing church, but it is only by spiritual birth that any one can be introduced into the church of Christ or family of God. You may have been baptised, you may have been received as a member of a church, and have never been born again, never made a member of Christ's Church. How is it with you, dear reader? Are you a member of *a* church merely? for if you have not been born of God you belong not to His Church, you belong not to *the* Church. "*Ye must be born again.*"

Professor of religion, you may go through your religious services in private or in public, you may have the form of godliness, say prayers, sing hymns, honour God with your lips, and never, never worship Him who must be worshipped, and can only be worshipped in spirit and in truth.

The new birth is not making a profession of religion, or *saying* you believe in Jesus. We live in days of great profession, but of very little vital Godliness. The form is fashionable, but the power of God denied. It is religion without reality, religion without God. What is it worth? It is a religion built on the *sand*, very beautiful in its external appearance, but all for the eye of man. There may be zeal and earnestness, but they are often mistaken for—as they often put to shame—true Christianity. Religiousness will never save you. "*You must be born again.*"

How is the new birth produced? "Except a man

be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God " (ver. 5).

Water is used by God as a type of the word of God. Read Eph. v. 26: "By the washing of water by the word." What does it mean in John iii.? Is it possible it *could* mean that when a child is sprinkled with water it immediately receives the new birth—it is born again? Surely not, though taught so boldly and made the foundation-stone of human systems of religion? Well, does water here mean the Spirit typically? If so, it would read thus: "Except a man be born of the Spirit and the Spirit." Would the Lord use tautology? Surely not. Then we must look to the other thing of which water is the type—the word of God.

The word is God's mighty instrument in the production of the new birth as in James i. 18: "Of His own will begat He us with the word of truth." And in 1 Pet. i. 23: "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God." "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. x. 17). It is by the word of God that dead souls are called into life. From this we see that everyone who believes on the name of the Lord Jesus is born of God. All who rest their souls on Christ and His finished work possess a new life, are born *from above*. "He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, *hath* everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but *is* passed from death unto life." Look and live. Believe, and have everlasting life. This is to be born again.

But some may say, "I believe, I always believed." Multitudes are under the impression that they do believe, and when we preach that people have only to believe to be saved, they have an idea that it does not apply to them. The fact of the matter is,

people mistake assent for consent, believing *about* for believing *upon*. They mean by believing that they give their assent to all the truths of Scripture ; in other words, believe the Bible from cover to cover. They believe all about the creation, the flood, the history of the children of Israel, the birth life, miracles, death, resurrection, and ascension of the Lord Jesus. They may believe ; that is, they may assent to all these, and much more, and go down to dark perdition unsaved. No amount of assent will save the sinner.

This sort of assent is nothing more or less than a cold, icy, traditional, historical belief, upon which thousands are depending, under the fearful delusion that it is salvation to their souls. This is the reason one sees so many who profess to believe on Jesus, walking after their own lusts, there being no change of life or conduct. Reader, be not deceived. " If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature : old things have passed away ; behold, all things are become new " (2 Cor. v. 17). If you say you have believed in Jesus, and show it not in your life, you are labouring under a most awful delusion. The faith, the belief that saves the sinner, is not intellectual assent to truths or doctrines, but consent of the heart to God's testimony about yourself, that you are a lost, guilty sinner, and about Jesus, that He is God's remedy for your ruin ; that He is the One that took *your* place on the cross, satisfying God's claim against *you*. In fact, it is appropriating to yourself Christ, and all the benefits, blessings, and results of His finished work.

Taking God at His Word

By GEORGE HUCKLESBY, London.

I WAS about fifteen years of age when I became anxious about my soul's eternal welfare, and began praying and trying, resolving and reforming, thereby hoping that I should merit God's favour, and obtain the assurance that my soul was saved ; but, like thousands of others, I had to prove that such was not God's way of peace. I had to learn that it was not by trying to do anything myself, but by trusting to the finished work of Another, that I could alone be saved. Although longing to have the assurance of salvation, I yet dreaded anyone speaking to me personally about my soul. But one night, after listening to a simple, earnest, Gospel address, a Christian lady spoke to me as I was leaving the meeting, and in a very gentle manner asked me, " If I was *really* saved? "

I replied, " No, I am not. " " But," said she, " do you *desire* to be saved? " I had to confess that I did desire this. " Then," she asked, " would you like to be saved *now*? " I answered that " I should, but it seemed impossible to have such a momentous matter settled *so quickly*." She then asked me to kneel down by her side while she asked the Lord to complete His work of grace in my heart that very night.

While we were still upon our knees, she opened her Bible, and asked me to read the first five verses of Isaiah liii. I did so, and then she said, " Now, I would like you to read that *fifth* verse a little differently, read it in the singular number instead of in the plural, so as to make it a *personal* matter between your own soul and God." I then

read the verse, "But He was wounded for *my* transgressions, He was bruised for *my* iniquities, the chastisement of *my* peace was upon Him, and by His stripes *I* am healed." "Do you really believe," said she, "that that was all true?" "I do," I replied. "I believe in my heart that *Jesus died for me.*" Then, turning to the Gospel by John and the fifth chapter, she asked me to read the 24th verse. I began reading, "Verily, verily," and again she stopped me and said, "Now, remember, the Lord Jesus is about to make an all-important statement, and He introduces it with a double affirmation which puts a double divine seal upon His utterance." "Verily, verily, I say," and another pause when she asked "Who is the *Speaker* in this passage?" "The Lord Jesus," I replied. "Yes, and does He mean what He says?" asked my teacher. "Oh, yes," I answered, "for He is God, and it is impossible for God to lie." "Now," said she, "let us see *what the Son of God really does say* in this passage. 'He that *heareth* My word': turning to me she asked, "Have you heard His word?" "Yes, many times before and again to-night," I answered. "Now let us read on," said she, "And *believeth* on Him that sent Me." "*Who* was it sent the Lord Jesus into the world?" "God, the Father," I replied. "Yes, and *why* did God the Father send His beloved Son into the world?" she asked. "To die for sinners," I said. "Yes. Are *you* a sinner?" "Yes, it is that that troubles me," I replied. "And you really believe that God the Father sent His only-begotten Son to die for *you* a sinner?" "Certainly," I said, "I believe that Jesus Christ came into the world to *save* sinners, that He was wounded for my transgressions, and died that I might live." "Let us see what our Lord goes on to say in

this verse, 'He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, HATH everlasting life.' Can you say you have that?" said the lady. "No," I replied, "because I do not *feel* that I have it, I cannot *realise* that it is really mine." "But," said she, "it does not say a word in the verse about *feeling* or *realising*, but about '*hearing*,' '*believing*,' and '*having*.'" "But," said I, "must I not wait until I *feel* I am saved, before I can say I am saved?" "Will you read the verse again?" said my kind helper, and I read the Lord's own weighty words once more: "He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but is passed from death unto life." The words were so clear, so conclusive, the statement so simple, yet so sublime, I dare not question what He, the Incarnate Truth, had said. I was bound to believe the declaration of Him who would rather die than suffer me to perish, and I just took Him at His word, ventured my soul's eternal welfare upon His finished work at Calvary, and the light of His truth shone in. I saw I *had*, I *must have* eternal life, for the immutable word of the immaculate Jesus, and the Incarnate God, was, "He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, *hath* everlasting life (a present enjoyed portion), and *shall not* come into judgment (a guarantee against *future* judgment), but *is* passed from death unto life" (a *past* experience, an accomplished transaction).

I well remember how heartily we sang as we rose from our knees:

"I do believe it, I do believe it,

I am saved by the blood of the Lamb;

My happy soul is free, for the Lord has pardoned me,
Hallelujah to Jesus' blest Name."

A Question of the Utmost Importance

By C. H. HINMAN, New Zealand.

HOW AND WHEN DO WE BECOME CHILDREN OF GOD?

THE above is a question of the utmost importance, fraught with momentous issues for weal or woe, and should be squarely and honestly faced by every living soul. To have wrong thoughts about this, simply means wrong thoughts about self, wrong thoughts about God, and wrong thoughts about His purposes toward us. This, of course, is enough to waste and wreck the whole of our life, to cause us to hinder and mislead others on the most vital of subjects, and to affect disastrously our eternal interests.

As the Scriptures of truth have come from God, and are a revelation of His mind toward the fallen sons of Adam, we must allow them to settle the matter for us. In other words, God must be allowed to legislate, and we must bow to what He says.

What, then, does the Book say concerning our state by nature? Well, briefly put, it simply views us as lost, ruined, alienated, and dead in trespasses and sins. A full length portrait is given in Rom. iii., and a sad picture it is, yet withal it is a good likeness of every one of us. Sin is a fact, and we cannot deny it. The Fall of man is a fact, and we cannot alter it. The hospital, asylum, gaol, and our own every day experience prove the Fall, and endorse Scripture testimony. From this it is evident we are not children of God by nature. The great Apostle of the Gentiles says: "We were by nature the children of wrath even as others" (Eph. ii. 3). Children of wrath are certainly not children of God. By nature we are of the family of Adam,

The man who was turned out of the garden of Eden ; hence he and his seed are by nature alienated from God. " In Adam all die " (1 Cor. xv. 22).

Neither do we get into family relationships by baptism, confirmation, taking the Lord's Supper, saying prayers, giving alms, or reformation, of any kind. Morality is not Christianity, and reformation is not salvation. The writer was baptised as a small boy, confirmed at the age of fourteen, but was very very far from being a child of God. Many, alas, besides the writer, have been baptised in their sins and confirmed in their iniquities, but the circle of the divine family is not entered by these portals. How did we get into the natural family? To ask this question is to answer it, and at the same time to indicate the answer to the other question : " How and when do persons become children of God? " If we get into the natural family by birth, we also get into the spiritual family by birth. There is no other way into it ; and it would be illogical, unscientific, and unscriptural to expect it. Jesus said in John iii. 5 : "*Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.*" Why cannot he see the kingdom of God apart from the new birth? Simply because he has no eyes to see it with. He has natural vision, but no spiritual vision, until born of the Spirit. Again, in ver. 5, the Lord says, in answer to the query of Nicodemus, "*Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.*" This *new birth* or inward spiritual change, not only gives us spiritual vision, but it also imparts a *new nature*. Thus we get eyes to see the kingdom, and a nature capable of enjoying it. Apart from the spiritual change the kingdom could not be enjoyed, even if it was possible to get into it. However, there is no hope of this apart from the new birth ; the

expression, "Born of *water and the Spirit*," simply means the word and the Spirit. This is abundantly proved by the following Scriptures: (James i. 18), "Of His own will begat He us *by the word of truth*"; (1 Pet. i. 23), "Being born again . . . of incorruptible seed, *by the word of God* which liveth and abideth for ever"; (Eph. v. 26), "The washing of water by the word"; (Titus iii. 5), "According to His mercy He saved us by the washing of regeneration." The scriptural answer, then, to the question at the head of this paper, is to be found in John i. 12, 13: "As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become children of God, even to them that believe on His name, which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." There is a concise yet complete answer to the question. We become children of God through receiving Christ, that is through believing on His name.

The writer was born into this world on the 10th of June, 1859. He was born again, or begotten of the Spirit, on the 10th May, 1880. For the first twenty years he was simply a natural man; religious indeed, but unregenerate, and unsaved. Since that eventful morning when the Holy Spirit implanted the Word of God in his heart, he has been, notwithstanding many failures, a child of God and an heir of the kingdom. The change was not reformation, but a *new birth*, introducing the subject of it into a new world, to which he had hitherto been a stranger. Perhaps a few lines as to *how* this great change came about may help the reader.

After years of spiritual blindness, hollow and heartless profession without possession, I was, through the mercy of God, brought under a different order of ministry. In place of the old dry sermon

that fell upon deaf ears and an unawakened conscience, I heard a simple, vigorous, and powerful exposition of the word of God. This let the light of heaven in upon me. My conscience was reached and convicted ; my whole life was laid bare ; the mask of formalism was torn off, and I soon realised that with all my religion I had no real peace, no true salvation. This gave me a great shock, but a great shock was just what I needed. At first I was angry, and did my utmost to find fault with the preacher and his preaching, but this gave me no comfort. The more I heard the more I was convinced that he was right and I was wrong. To this preaching I had to listen, whether I wished it or not. Yet the more I listened the more I was convinced that I was a lost sinner on my way to a lost eternity. My baptism had told me that I was made a "member of Christ, a child of God, and an heir of the kingdom of heaven," but I knew now that this was a mere sham and a delusion. Well I knew I was in the world and of it, and this only was my portion. I now became seriously alarmed, deeply convicted, utterly wretched ; yet, thank God, I did not strive against it, but, on the contrary, I did my best to get out of the difficulty. My efforts, however, only made matters worse, and increased my darkness. I tried to reform, to mend my ways, to feel better, but it brought no satisfaction, no peace. Peace with God is not found on these lines ; neither do we become children of God by inward struggles or outward reform. Like others, however, I had to exhaust my resources, then my extremity became God's opportunity. When I ceased to struggle, stood still in utter helplessness, He revealed the all-sufficiency of the finished work of Christ.

Oh what a moment ! The moment of my life-

time ! when I, a guilty, lost, and helpless sinner, stood still and listened to the words, " It is finished " (John xix. 30). To this my heart responded, Lord, I believe it ! Thou hast finished the work, paid my debt, met the claims of God. I do believe it. That moment I was saved. I was born again. The inward spiritual change had taken place, thus I was a child of God. Not merely now in name or profession, but in deed and in truth. How simple it all was, and how I wondered at not seeing it before : yet upon that change, that decision, that definite acceptance of Christ as my own personal Saviour, my whole future for time and eternity depended.

Now, dear reader, are YOU a child of God? Have *you* been begotten of the Spirit? Have *you* had an experience anything like the above? If not, do not flatter yourself that you are a Christian, for you are not. Do not miss the mark here, we beseech you, for if you do a lost eternity will be your portion. Stop where you are. Do not go a step further in the wrong direction, lest it should be a step too far. Listen then to what the Lord Himself says : " I am the way, and the truth, and the life ; *no man cometh unto the Father but by Me* " (John xiv. 6). Again, " Him that cometh to me *I will in no wise cast out* " (John vi. 37). If you come, just as you are, He will receive you (Luke xv. 2). If you trust Him, He will save you (Heb. vii. 25), or, if you receive Him by simple faith, He will give you right to become a child of God (John i. 12), and demonstrate in your own personal experience an answer to the question at the head of this paper.

Regeneration not Reformation

By J. W. JORDAN, London.

"How do we become children of God?" is the most important question that can be asked by any living being, and there is but one true answer to it, which can be found only in the Word of God.

When we first came into being, we were "shapen in iniquity" (Ps. li. 5), and were constituted by nature "children of wrath" even as others (Eph. ii. 1, 2). Therefore, there is a dire and imperative necessity that we should be "*born again*."

As people become members of the family to which they belong by being born into it, so also to become a child of God, the soul must be born into His family—BORN AGAIN, or "Born from above" (John iii. 3, margin).

There was a time when we were born into this world by natural birth, and if we would become children of God, there must be a time when we are born into the heavenly world by *spiritual birth*. Reformation will not suffice. It must be regeneration. A drunkard, for instance, might be recovered from drunkenness, and it would be an excellent work accomplished, but after all it would be only reformation. To become saved, we must be born again or regenerated. Prayers, confession of sin, and endeavour to live a good life may be very well as far as they go, but these things are not REGENERATION. An artificial flower, however perfectly and beautifully made, will not grow, neither will an artificial tree produce fruit. Why not? simply because they have no life. And thus it is the case with one who is not born again. Good works, alms giving, and morality of life cannot take the place of REGENERATION.

In John iii. 5, it says, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." And in 1 Pet. i. 23, we read, "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God which liveth and abideth for ever." Putting these Scriptures together we learn that there are two things indispensable to enable a person to be born again. The first is, WATER (John iii. 5), as typical of the word of God, according to 1 Pet. i. 23, and Eph. v. 26, and the second is, THE SPIRIT (John iii. 5). It is impossible, therefore, to become children of God apart from the WORD OF GOD and THE SPIRIT OF GOD.

The word of God is necessary in order to set before the individual the Death and Resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and to show that He was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification (Rom. iv. 25), and that by Faith alone in Him and the sacrifice He offered, the sinner can be saved. To illustrate how the new birth takes place, the Lord Jesus said in John iii. 14, 15: "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

The Israelites having been bitten by the fiery serpents were dying. This is a picture of souls lying dead in their sins exposed to the judgment of God. God found a remedy for Israel. They were directed to look upon the serpent of brass, and WHEN they LOOKED they LIVED (Num. xxi. 8, 9). In the same way we are exhorted to BELIEVE in Christ lifted up on the cross for our sins: to LOOK unto HIM as our Substitute, dying under the wrath of God for us, and to those who thus believe in Him, the Word of God says: "He

that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life " (John iii. 36).

The Spirit of God operating upon the soul makes the lifting up of Christ on the cross very real to the heart, and enables the sinner to believe that it was for him individually that Christ died, to put away his sins by the sacrifice of Himself. Thus Christ is received, and the soul is quickened into life. "He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life."

"WHEN do persons become children of God?" The answer to this question is: Immediately they believe on the Lord Jesus Christ to the saving of the soul. In John v. 24, it is written, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, HATH everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life." HATH is present possession, and to possess everlasting life is to become a child of God. Further, this portion says: "Is passed from DEATH unto LIFE." When? Upon believing. Immediately the Israelites looked to the serpent of brass, they LIVED; there was nothing more to do. No prayers, no tears, no penance, only a look saved them.

This is the divine illustration given to us by Christ Himself, setting forth the truth, that immediately the sinner looks to the crucified Saviour dying on the cross for his guilt, and from the heart trusts his all to Him, the sacrifice of Calvary, he IS passed from death unto life. To this agree the words of the Lord Jesus: "He that believeth on Me, HATH everlasting life" (John vi. 47), and those of the Apostle John: "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ IS born of God" (1 John v. 1).

Christ an All-Sufficient Saviour

By W. R. LEWIS, Bath

"WITH the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Rom. x. 10). Faith is the turning to God, the renouncing of self (1 Thess. i. 9, 10). It is the heart welcoming God's testimony in His Word, believing the Gospel to be indeed *true*, knowing that apart from it, there is really no hope. Under the law, it was a man's own works by which he was to live. This, consequently, invariably meant "curse," for "cursed is *everyone* that *continueth* not in *all* things that are written in the book of the law to do them" (Gal. iii. 13). But in the Gospel it is the work of Another that is set before us. Christ has been under the curse for those hopelessly under the curse of the law. Those who own their sins are thankful to find in Him the Only and the All-sufficient Saviour.

THE REMEDY.

"As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life" (John iii. 14, 15). All that a bitten Israelite had to do to be healed was to look at that brazen serpent lifted high above the camp, and when (yes, *when*) he looked unto the serpent of brass, he lived (Num. xxi. 9). Did he need to be healed? Yes, he was dying. *How* could he be healed? By simply looking at the brazen serpent. *When* was he healed? The moment he turned his eyes to the remedy which God in grace had provided. So now, *immediately* a poor sinner

in his sin and misery—hitherto with his back to God, and his face to eternal judgment—looks away from self, and his filthy rags of self-righteousness, to Christ, the sinless One, that poor sinner “ becomes the righteousness of God in Him ” (2 Cor. v. 24). In the cross, man’s hatred was shown out to the full. Yet there the heart of God was revealed in love to the sinner in his helplessness and godlessness (Rom. v. 5). He has there set forth Christ Jesus “ to be a propitiation through faith in His blood ” (Rom. iii. 25), and now, “ He that *believeth* on the Son *hath* everlasting life ” (John iii. 36). He is begotten of God. He is born anew from a fresh and divine source. He is in Christ, as before he was in Adam. He is God’s “ workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works.”

THE FRUIT.

“ If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things have passed away; behold, all things are become new ” (2 Cor. v. 17). His “ citizenship is in heaven, whence also he looks for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ ” (Phil. iii. 20, 21). His body for the present remains the same, but he has a new experience. Not only does the Holy Spirit bear witness *to* him through the Word of the love of God in the gift of His beloved Son, and of the efficacy of the work of Christ, but He sheds abroad *in* his heart the love of God (Rom. v. 5). And this is experience; this is knowledge (1 John iv. 7). That which gives me *peace* of conscience must ever be God’s testimony to the work of the Lord Jesus (Exod. xii. 13), for faith rests, not upon experience, but upon God’s estimate of the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, as He has revealed it in His Word (1 John i. 7). But that which gives me *joy*, is the Holy Spirit’s operation in my heart,

testifying that not only is the work done, but producing *in* me the *knowledge* that the work is done, and that God is satisfied. God has found His rest in His Son, and knowing this, I have "joy and peace in believing" (Rom. xv. 13). I can rejoice in God (Rom. v. 10).

THE TEST.

But this joy and peace of heart will not be mine while I am in any way grieving the Holy Spirit. The Gospel is intolerant of evil. If sin was so abhorrent in God's sight, that it cost Him the life of His beloved Son, think you that He can sanction evil even in His own children? Whatever the mercy of God, whatever the proved weakness, need, and guilt of man, there is not, nor can be, even the least compromise of the holiness of God. Through the death and resurrection of Christ, God can *righteously* justify the sinner who believes on Jesus. But it must be remembered that grace—unless it be, as it is to be feared it often is, a mere notion in the head without operation in the heart—teaches us that "we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world" (Titus ii. 12). I have no good ground for believing that I am "washed, sanctified, and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and by the Spirit of our God" (1 Cor. vii. 11), if I have no desire that Christ should be magnified in my body, whether by life, or by death (Phil. i. 20; 1 Pet. ii. 9). It is useless to say that I believe, unless that belief is evidenced by obedience, for disobedience is the fruit of unbelief (Heb. iii. 12; iv. 11). "If a man love Me, he will keep My word" (John xiv. 23). The Lord grant that no one who reads this may be deceived with "Peace, peace, when there is no peace." There is a day coming when the

refuge of lies will be swept away, and, in view of it, we may well betake ourselves to God and His Word, and see to it that our profession is not mere "profession." "Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not preached in Thy name, and in Thy name have cast out demons, and in Thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from Me, ye that work iniquity" (Matt. vii. 22, 23). Solemn words! So near to the kingdom, and yet so far off! A challenge to all our hearts.

Ye Must Be Born Again

By D. L. MOODY, Chicago

I WAS twenty years old before I ever heard a sermon on regeneration. I was always told to be good, but you might as well tell a black man to be a white man as to tell him to be good without telling him how. You might tell a slave to be free, but that would not make him free. Christ not only tells us to be free but He frees us.

We are a bad lot, the whole of us, by nature. It is astonishing how the devil blinds us and makes us think we are so naturally good. Don't talk to me about people being naturally good and angelic. We are naturally bad, the whole of us. The first man born of a woman was a murderer. Sin leaped into the world full grown, and the whole race has been bad all the way down. Man is naturally bad.

Man has lost the image of God. Take just one description that Christ gives of the human heart: "Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies; these are the things which defile the

man." Now, I want to ask you how in the world can you get a pure stream when you have such an impure fountain? It isn't patching up the old man that is needed, but it is hewing down that tree and putting a new graft in. It is an entire change—a new creation.

I have heard of reform, reform, until I am tired and sick of the whole thing. It is regeneration by the power of the Holy Ghost that we need. You may whitewash a pest-house but it will be a pest-house still.

The new birth isn't good resolutions, or good intentions, or turning over a new leaf, or making promises, or vows. That isn't the new birth at all.

Perhaps some of you say, "What is it?" Well, listen: "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not; but as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name: which were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

To become a partaker of the divine nature is the greatest blessing that can come to any man this side of heaven. God has been very, very good to me. It has just been blessing upon blessing. But there is one blessing that just towers high above them all. There is one blessing that came to me one night. I remember the night. It was in a shoe store in Boston. I never go to Boston that I don't go around and take a look at that place where God met me and God imparted to me a new nature. Old things passed away that night; a new life dawned upon me, and that is the greatest blessing that has ever come to me this side of heaven. I got God's nature, a new nature, distinct and separate from the old nature. I would doubt my existence as quick as I would doubt that fact.

If you are not sure that you have become a partaker of the divine nature, don't eat, drink, or sleep until you get that new nature.

And when you get that new nature, it is easy to serve God. He isn't a hard Master.

In India, the swan is considered a sacred bird. They have a legend there that one day an old crane was out on the beach looking for snails, and down came a big white swan. The crane stretched out its great long neck, and said to the swan, "Where do you come from?"

The swan said he came from heaven.

"Heaven," said the crane, "I never heard of that place. Is it far away?"

"Oh, yes."

"Is it a good country?"

"Oh, yes."

"Is it better than this?"

"Oh, far better," and the swan went on expatiating about heaven, about its lakes and its rivers, and its fountains and its climate.

The old crane stood there listening, and when the swan got through, said:

"Have they any snails there?"

The swan drew itself up and said, "No, vile things! they wouldn't have them in heaven."

"Well, then," said the crane, "you can have your heaven. I don't want it, I want snails."

Don't you see a mighty truth wrapped up in that legend? I just as much believe that a man has got to be born from above before he wants to go to heaven, as I believe that I exist. Take an unregenerated man, and put him under the shadow of the tree of life, and it would be hell to him. Take the carnal man, the natural man, and put him on the crystal pavements of heaven, and it would be hell to him. Man has got to have a divine

nature before he will want to go to heaven. If he has this low nature, he doesn't want to go there. He would be out of his element, he would be out of his atmosphere if he got there. What men want is to be born from above, born again, born of the Spirit, and then they will live for heaven. And you will never get a man or a woman that will live for heaven until they are born from above, until they get the divine life.

How solemn these words are : " Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God," much less inherit it. If this thing be true, it is a most solemn thing, and you and I cannot afford to be deceived. Let us put the question here to ourselves : Have I really been born of the Spirit?

When I was born of my mother, I got a nature from my mother, and I got life from her ; but in Boston, seventeen years afterward, I was born from above ; I got life from God, a new life, distinct and separate from the natural life. I got a life that is as everlasting as God's life ; a life that there is no end to ; eternal life. How did I get it? By receiving the word of God into my heart. Christ says, " The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." There is life in His word. You may take the word of God into your heart, and there is the germ, there is the life. If I should take my watch and plant it, I wouldn't get any little watches, would I? Why? Because the germ of life is not there.

If I should plant a bushel of gravel, I wouldn't get any more gravel, would I? But let me plant a bushel of corn at the proper time, let me get the seed and put it into the ground in the month of May, and let the dews of heaven come upon the land, and the rain and the sun, and out of the death of that corn will come a new life. " The

words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life." Then the Bible speaks in another place of "the incorruptible seed, which is the word of God."

Oh, man, woman, you may be deceived about ten thousand things, but do not be deceived on this one thing! *Make sure you have the divine nature, that you have been born from above, that you have been born of God, that you have a life that has come from God, distinct and separate from the natural life, a new life, a new creation.*

The Lord's Dealings with an Officer

By Col. A. O. MOLESWORTH.

THOUGH the experience of those who have been brought to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as their Saviour differ, yet there is the almost universal confession, "I was blind but now I see."

All confess the same gracious working of God by His Spirit in bringing them "out of darkness into His marvellous light," and causing them to pass from "death into life."

The methods that God in His wisdom adopts to lead men to repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus are varied, but the same end is attained, namely, the salvation of lost sinful creatures, and the bringing of such into a new condition and estate by creating them anew in Christ Jesus. Starting with the God-declared truths that "*All* have sinned and come short of the glory of God," that "except a man be born again, he cannot *see* the kingdom of God," and that "that which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is

Spirit," we find that we are shut up to God's unchanging word of truth, and that if men are to be saved at all "it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but *of God that showeth mercy.*"

Now "the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man hath appeared," and "it became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory to make the Captain of their salvation perfect (as such) by (His) suffering." To Him, therefore, is it given to "give eternal life to as many as" God has given Him.

This new and eternal life is "the gift of God," and it is the privilege and property of all who receive the Lord Jesus as their Saviour, for "as many as *received Him* to them gave He the right—power or privilege—to become the children of God, even to them that believe on His name." This new birth is "not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

Now it is the office of the Holy Spirit to convince man of "sin, of righteousness, and of judgment," and to cause them to know their need of a Saviour, of a Sacrifice all-sufficient to meet their need before God, and where the Spirit of God is not resisted, the soul finds in the Lord Jesus Christ this sacrifice, this salvation.

We find, then, we are shut up to one way, even to that of repentance towards God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ alone.

Thus have we learned from the word of God how we become Christians, and when we become Christians. We learn, further, that we may know assuredly that we are truly God's children. The Holy Spirit bears witness with our spirits that we are the children of God, "for we have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear," but we have received the spirit of adoption (sonship) whereby

we cry, "Abba, Father." And "if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His."

Besides this, we have the authority of His own word, "Beloved, *now* are we the sons of God," and "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts." "I write unto you, little children, that ye may know that your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake."

This is the record that God hath given unto us, eternal life, and this life is in His Son." "He that hath the Son hath life."

And if one may be permitted to add one's own personal experience as to these truths, I would, being now in the 50th year of my Christian life, bear testimony as to the power of the salvation of God. What I have written above has become my own experience. For years, before my true conversion to God, I was anxious to be a real Christian, but no one ever took me by the hand and showed me the way. Religiously brought up, and ever enjoined *to be good*, yet of Christ as a Saviour I knew nothing, save historically. Yet He "who leadeth the blind by a way that they know not," was by His Spirit convicting me of my state as a sinner before Him, and I trembled to die. That a loving Christian mother was ever praying for me, I knew. (My godly father had, years before, been called home). Wearied with my sinful estate, I fell into the company of several men, earnest Christians, brother-officers, whose life and ways doubtless told on me, until definitely one night, in August, 1859, in my 21st year, I was led to see the awful holiness of God and how He had been offended by my life and ways. I was enabled to cast myself on His mercy for forgiveness and salvation. I then learned simply that Christ had died for me, and that He could save me. This was the beginning of a new

life. Tremblingly for fear of falling or relapsing, I went on, until I found that He was able to keep me from falling, and was ever living to save me "to the uttermost." Almost at once I began to speak of the love of God to others, and have never ceased, at home and abroad, to preach the Gospel of Christ. More and more conscious of my own inherent sinfulness and imperfection, I am learning more and more to rejoice in the perfect work of my Saviour for me on the cross, and of being counted now as united to Him by faith.

And still my prayer is, "Hold Thou me up, and I shall be safe," if so "I may attain unto" that end for which He has apprehended me.

A Churchman's Testimony

By H. B. MACARTNEY, M.A., Melbourne.

DEAR READERS, My contribution to the literature of the "New Birth" must take the form of a letter. It is best to be personal in a matter of life and death. I know what I am writing about. For fifty years I have searched out this great subject from the Word of God. For fifty years I have had the "life eternal." Up to seventeen I was highly religious, and followed closely in the steps of a precious father and mother. But when the Holy Spirit came with His search-light, my heart sank, and I was filled with fear. I passed through fire and water, but was brought out into a wealthy place, and I would not be back again in my old position for all the wealth of India. My frames and feelings ebb and flow. I am not by any means as deeply rooted in God as I ought to be. My STATE is variable and unsatisfying. But my STANDING is CHRIST HIMSELF. HE is my

Gibraltar, my Rock, impregnable, immutable. Moreover, my heart's knowledge of Him, my delight in Him, my communion with Him, all had a definite beginning. "As many as RECEIVED HIM to them gave He the right to become CHILDREN OF GOD" (John i. 12, R.V.). That verse is radical, and ought to be convincing—it puts the "HOW" of regeneration in a nutshell. Take it as your clue, and you will find that this special doctrine will be projected before your eyes on hundreds of Bible pages with stereoscopic distinctness. It will deliver you from doubts and fears; you will enjoy full assurance. You know that you DID RECEIVE HIM *once*, or (if you did not), that if you RECEIVE HIM NOW, you fulfil the sole condition, "you believe on His name." Now what you receive you *have*. "He that hath the Son *hath life*." With your arms of faith embracing Him, and His arms of power embracing you, you can "never perish"—He says so. His word is enough. Do not wound Him by unbelief.

Secondly, dear readers, my letter must be from a churchman to churchmen. I am sorely concerned for those of my own communion who lean on "IT," a sacrament, instead of receiving "HIM," a Saviour. Non-conformists will excuse me, I am sure, for seeking to emancipate my immediate brethren from one of the most dangerous delusions that ever captivated the soul of man. It is so comforting to the natural mind to go to sleep on that delicious pillow. "I *am* a Christian because I was baptized." Non-conformists will also excuse me, I am convinced, if I give a solemn pledge to church members, that I am in full accord with the closing words of our article, xxvi. Were I suspected of unsoundness on this point, the whole of my argument would be thrown away, as far as Anglicans are concerned.

(a) As to Sacramental Teaching in the New Testament, let me put my conclusions broadly. Now inasmuch as the question of either Sacrament in relation to children is never once discussed from Matthew to Revelation, the ground is clear for me to say, that, in theory *both Sacraments are intended for SAVED PEOPLE and for them ONLY*. This is generally admitted in the case of the Lord's Supper. There can be no appeal from 1 Cor. xi. 27, R.V. "Whosoever shall eat the bread or drink the cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be *guilty*"; and from article xxix., "Such as be void of a lively faith . . . in no wise are they partakers of Christ, but rather, to their condemnation, do eat and drink the sign or Sacrament of so great a thing." What *can* be more conclusive? But in regard to Baptism: Must candidates be believers? Certainly. We have just read that a sacrament is a *sign*, a sign, that is, not of something which we want to possess, but do not yet possess, but of something which we have in full possession, which we have possessed previously. The blessing of justification came to Abraham while he was still in his sins; he was accounted righteous before God, because he believed in that wonderful God "who justifieth the ungodly" (Rom. v. 5). It was after that that he received circumcision. St. Peter was in full accord with St. Paul when he asks in Acts x. 47: "Can any man forbid water that these should not be baptised, which *have* received the Holy Ghost as well as we?" God's order is: first, the inward and spiritual grace; second, the outward and visible sign. Article vi. drives me to my Bible, and this is what the Bible teaches me: first, out of self into Christ secretly; second, out of the world into the Church openly.

(b) Sonship is a magnificent inheritance, and he

who claims sonship must be prepared to prove his "house and lineage." St. John has supplied quite a number of tests, and they dispose for ever of any idea of inherent Sacramental efficacy. He lays it down in his Gospel from the lips of the Lord Jesus, that a man "*must be born again,*" and in his first Epistle at chapter ii. 29, he returns to the subject: "Ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is *begotten* of Him," at that word (reminding him of the "Only Begotten") he catches fire; he seems like Samuel Rutherford, as if he would fly from his pulpit at such a thought—"Behold," "what manner," "called children," "such we are," "now are we." Then recalling himself, and in order to lay down lines of guidance against the Apostacy and against self-deception, he proceeds to enunciate *five tests*. Here they are:

1. (iii. 9) "he cannot sin," cannot keep on sinning, his normal direction is against sin.
2. (iv. 7, 8, R.V.) "Every one that *loveth* is begotten of God . . . He that *loveth not knoweth not God*." Here we have not only a negative departure from evil, but a positive demand for a new principle of love.
3. (v. 1) "Whosoever loveth Him that begat, loveth *him also that is begotten* of Him." Here we have a profession of love towards one Invisible God, tested by the professor's love for the children of God. This is very solemn!
4. (v. 4, R.V.) "Whosoever is begotten of God overcome . . . and this is the victory that hath overcome the world, even *our faith*." What has your faith done for you? What is your faith doing for you? What do you expect your faith to do for you?
5. Lastly (v. 18, R.V.), "He that was begotten of God keepeth him (or himself), and that wicked one toucheth him not." No comment is needed here, and all these words taken together, while they do not by

any means teach eradication or sinless perfection, they do at least require good fruit as evidence that the tree is not a thorn !

Finally, you say perhaps, " I was born again in baptism." I answer, How do you know? You have no proof of the efficacy of child baptism, for there is no case of child baptism mentioned in the whole Bible ! You have not a particle of evidence on which to build your hope. If you appeal to the Church, she is helpless, whatever she is able to say in her services. Beware, therefore, dear readers, of the false security of a " refuge of lies."

In any case we must admit that the ordinary New Testament means of the new birth was the Water of the Word. " Having been begotten again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, through *the word of God*, which liveth and abideth " (1 Pet. i. 23). Oh, beloved, read what God says about yourself, and also what He says concerning the Lord Jesus ; believe like a little child, and it wont be long before you begin to breathe a new air in a new world—a life of light, a life of love.

The Two Families

By T. D. W. MUIR, Detroit, Mich., U.S.A.

WHEN a child attending a Sunday-school, I was accustomed to sing with others during our exercises :

" Lord, I ascribe it to Thy grace,
And not to chance, as others do,
That I was born of Christian race,
And not a heathen or a Jew."

As the years passed by, and I reached manhood, I felt it was incumbent upon me to live up to my character. I was a Christian, for had I not been

"born of Christian race," had not my parents "dedicated" me at my christening to God? and, furthermore, had they not sought to bring me up "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord?"

But, alas! I was deeply conscious that, while I willingly admitted that all this had been done *for* me, my heart loved the same things, and my feet walked in the same paths of worldliness, as those who had no such pretensions. It was evident I needed *something*, but what that was, and how I would secure it for myself, I knew not.

One evening, now many years ago, I sat listening to the preaching of God's Word. The Scripture before us was that important interview between the Lord Jesus and Nicodemus, the Jewish ruler, as narrated in the 3rd chapter of John's Gospel. Emphasis was laid upon the thrice-repeated statement of the Lord Jesus, that Nicodemus, in spite of the fact that he was born of parents who were of the seed of Abraham—with whom God was in covenant relationship—in spite of the fact that he was a prominent member of the most orthodox sect of the day, and was himself probably of blameless life, yet, he needed to be "born again," to be born from above (John iii. 3, 5, 7). To me it was a most startling discovery. In comparison with such a man as Nicodemus, what chance had I? Absolutely none. If *he* needed to be born from above, who had such natural and acquired advantages, *how much more did I?* For the first time in my life the awful fact was borne in upon me that my *thoughts* of myself, as well as my *desires* and *actions*, had been all mistaken. I had *not* been "born of Christian race!" I was *not* a Christian, but a poor Gentile dog, an alien from the commonwealth of Israel, outside the covenants of promise, and without hope of ever entering the kingdom of God, unless

born again (Eph. ii. 11, 12). But God was very gracious, and having opened my eyes to my *need*, He then made known to me through His word the *provision* of His *grace*—the Lord Jesus Christ! I saw my mistake. I had “inherited” from my parents and adopted as my own an adherence to the *profession of Christianity*, but I had missed the Christ of God. Now, *He* was presented to me as the One who came into the world to save, not Christians by birth, but *sinner*s. At that moment my heart received *Him*, I believed on *Him*, and there and then I was made a child of God, as it is written to the saints of Galatia: “Ye are all the sons of God, *by faith* in Christ Jesus.”

So much by way of personal experience, and the testimony of Scripture is in keeping with it, that man, by nature, is *not* a child of God! He is a *creature* of God’s hand, but not a *child* in the family of God. On the contrary, Scripture speaks of the unregenerate as—

Children of wrath,
Children of disobedience, or unbelief,
Children of this world, and
Children of the Wicked One.

Hence to religious or profane, the word of the Lord is clear: “*Ye must be born again.*”

Born into the family of Adam, whether Jew or Gentile, he inherits the sinful nature that so soon manifests itself in actual sin against God, and insubjection to His will. Education and environment may put a polish on the *outside* but cannot reach the condition of that which is *within*. “Religion,” like the drapings of the dead, may cover the evidence of death, but cannot give life from God, or that fitness needful for the enjoyment of His presence. How evident the fact, then, “*Ye must be born again*”!

BUT HOW? and *WHEN?* "He came to His own and His own received Him not: but as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become *the children of God* even to them that believe on His name; which were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John i. 11-13). They became the sons, that is, the children of God, "through faith in Christ Jesus" (Gal. iii. 26). Clearly, then, one does NOT become a child of God

By natural birth;

By being "christened";

By being "dedicated" to God;

By being religious;

By being a church-member;

By being a "Christian-worker";

By being an elder, or even a preacher, but,

By receiving, or believing on the Lord Jesus Christ, to the salvation of the soul (John i. 12; v. 24).

God's instrument in the New Birth is His own word, applied by the Spirit of God (John iii. 5). "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God which liveth and abideth for ever . . . and *this is the word which by the Gospel is preached unto you*" (1 Pet. i. 23-25). "Of His own will begat He us by the word of truth that we should be a kind of first-fruits of His creatures" (James i. 18).

How, then, does a man become a child of God? Through believing on the Christ who died for him.

When does he become a child of God? The moment he believes on Christ.

How long will the relationship last? Eternally! for "whatsoever God doeth it shall be for ever" (Eccles. iii. 14). Hallelujah!

Passing from Death unto Life

By Dr. W. J. MATTHEWS, Belfast.

THE Lord Jesus told Nicodemus "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John iii. 3). A birth into the natural world as a rule implies life, but to this rule there are exceptions, but there is absolutely no exception to the rule in the birth from above into the kingdom of God. Every one who is born again has received divine life, everlasting life.

How this birth is brought about, and life everlasting received, is stated in simple language in the 14th to 16th verses of the same chapter: "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

From this simple Scriptural statement as to how the NEW BIRTH is brought about in the soul, two points are lucid and clear; first, it is through believing in the uplifted Son of Man as the sin-bearer, and second, that the soul thus brought to life receives from the same authority the assurance of it; mark the words, "*have everlasting life.*" The Lord Jesus not only gives life, but He came "To give knowledge of salvation unto His people by remission of their sins" (Luke i. 77). "I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on Me should not abide in darkness" (John xii. 46). Even as it is said, He (God) "hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light, and for this

they were to show forth His praises " (1 Pet. ii. '9).

A very common error prevails amongst those who rely upon an imaginary safety, without having experienced the NEW BIRTH, viz., they speak of having "saving faith," apart from the "faith of assurance," but these statements do not agree. When one has "saving faith," he has not only "everlasting life," "*but is passed from death unto life*" (John v. 24). He is "forgiven," and is "justified from all things" (Acts xiii. 38, 39). Yea, more, he has peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. v. 1), and this peace is the fruit of his salvation, he has joy (ver. 2). Moreover, the love of God is shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto him (Rom. v. 5). Scripture language is that of certainty, not merely an opinion or conjecture. A believer is one who believes, not one who "thinks," or "hopes," that he has eternal life. "We know," was the language of the Apostle John. "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren" (1 John iii. 15). "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may *know* that ye *have* eternal life (1 John v. 13).

Many have believed Scriptural facts and even texts, who never, it is to be feared, *received* the Lord Jesus Christ, or believed on *Him*, and so have never received life. "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life" (1 John v. 12). Others have experienced a happy feeling, and therefore think they are saved, while many say, "If I am to be saved, I will be saved; and if not, I cannot help it." Such are some of the blinding delusions of the god of this world.

"But if our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them

that are perishing : in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." It is a definite experience wrought in the soul by the Holy Spirit (John iii. 5), in some more deeply than in others, but all who are born again have passed from death unto life (John v. 24).

It is almost thirty-five years since I first trusted Christ, and received life everlasting. I know the "when, where, and how," because it was a definite act of faith, a definite receiving of life into the soul, and then I knew from the promise of God in John v. 24 that I had everlasting life : "He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life." As I looked at the promise and applied it to myself, I knew that I had everlasting life there and then through believing in the Son of God. This being a matter of everlasting importance to all, no one should rest until he knows assuredly that his sins are forgiven. Let him come to Christ, who will not cast him out, and then he will know the when and the how "he passed from death unto life."

What saith the Scripture?

By BENJAMIN R. MUDDITT, London

WITH regard to this most important question "How and when may we become the children of God," I do not think I can do better than relate my own experience and show how I became a "child of God," for that *all* are not the children of God is clear from John viii. 44, when the Lord Jesus Christ

in speaking to some of the Jews said, "Ye are of your father the devil."

Like many more, I was brought up more or less religiously, always taught to reverence the Bible (but rather the letter than the spirit), and my mother, as far as she had light, taught me the great lessons of the word of God. Christened and confirmed, I was fully persuaded that I was "now made a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven." Being taught the necessity of going through some religious observances, I attended my place of worship regularly, frequently three times on the Sunday, was in the choir from an early age, was a scholar, then a teacher, and afterwards assistant-superintendent in the Sunday-school, and ready to help in any way in the "good work."

In 1884, a friend, in whose house I was spending the evening, asked me if I was "saved." I was very indignant at the question, and replied that I did not believe in that sort of thing at all, as it was *impossible to know that we are saved* in this life. In my ignorance, and yet no doubt inclined by my early training to bow to the word of God, I at once said, "If you can show me in the Bible that it is possible to know it, I will believe it." It was not long before I was shown Rom. x. 9: "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, *thou shalt be saved*"; Acts xvi. 31: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and *thou shalt be saved*"; 1 Cor. xv. 2 (the Gospel which I preached unto you): "By which also ye *are saved*"; and 1 John v. 13: "These things have I written unto you that believe . . . that ye may *know* that ye *have* eternal life." These Scriptures plainly declare that all who believe *are saved*, and,

by inference, that all who refuse to believe must be lost. This was a revelation to me, and greatly disturbed my peace of mind. I was distressed at finding out that all my religion was of no avail, and that "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John iii. 3), and that, by nature, I was a "child of wrath" even as others (Eph. ii. 3).

I was now anxious to know this salvation, and so accompanied my friend to a Gospel meeting on the following Lord's Day. There and then, while a servant of the Lord, Mr John M'Vicker, from the north of Ireland, was preaching, I simply accepted the testimony of the word of God concerning Christ, and I became at once a child of God, being "born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God which liveth and abideth for ever" (1 Pet. i. 23).

I had one great dread, and that was to how I should meet my companion in business the next morning, but after looking to God for help, I was able to tell him, "I was converted last night at ——" and his reply was, "Thank God, so was I at ——" This was a pleasant surprise to both of us, and we praised God together.

I have given my experience somewhat in detail mainly because it so aptly answers the question which is before us: "How and when do persons become the children of God." With me, it was through believing the word of God, first, as to my own condition as lost and guilty before Him, and then, as to the all-sufficiency of the work of Christ on the cross to meet all the claims of God against me. Oh, that men would deal with this question in the same common-sense, logical manner in which they deal with present, every day questions. For instance, how do our children *become* ours? and

when? They are born to us, and it is *then* they become ours. Just so simply can we put the question of becoming "children of God," it is by *birth*, generally spoken of as the "new birth," and it is only *then* that we enter upon this relationship. Leave tradition and come to the Bible with an unbiassed mind. We there read (John iii. 7), "Ye must be born again." This shuts us up to this "new birth." How that is to take place is clearly set forth in John i. 12, 13: "As many as received Him (Jesus), to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name, which were *born* not of blood . . . but *of God*," the passage already quoted 1 Pet. i. 23, also 1 John v. 1: "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God."

Our only guide in this all-important matter is the *Word of God*, and my prayer is that the reader will turn from men's theories, traditions, new theologies, and delusive arguments, and accept its plain teaching.

Fear Not, Only Believe

By ALEXANDER MARSHALL

Author of "God's Way of Salvation"

THE Scriptures reveal the fact that "*All* have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. iii. 23), and that "there is *none righteous* no *not one*" (Rom. iii. 10).

A holy and righteous God hates sin with a perfect hatred, and declares that "the soul that sinneth it *shall die*" (Ezek. xviii. 20), and that "the wages of sin is *death*" (Rom. vi. 23). What, then, is to become of us? All have gone astray from the path of obedience, each of us has taken

his own way (Isa. liii. 6), and "Whosoever shall keep the whole law and yet offend in *one point* he is *guilty of all*" (James ii. 10). If the "wages of sin is death," and all of us have earned the "wages," how can we escape?

GOD'S PROVISION.

When there was no eye to pity, and no arm to save, a voice from heaven was heard, "Deliver him (the sinner) from going down to the pit, I have found a ransom" (Job xxxiii. 24). What was the "ransom" of God's provision? "There is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, *who gave Himself a ransom for all*" (1 Tim. ii. 4-6). The Lord Jesus paid the ransom, and salvation is free. Christ was "made sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor. v. 21).

"He was wounded for our transgressions; He was bruised for our iniquities" (Isa. liii. 5). Calvary's cross proclaims the fact that God is "a just God and a Saviour" (Isa. xlv. 21). "Mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other" (Ps. lxxxv. 10). Because of what Christ did and suffered God can righteously justify all who believe on Him. "Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, that He might be just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus" (Rom. iii. 24-26). *God is satisfied with the "finished" work of Christ, and He desires that sinners should be satisfied with that which satisfies Him.*

HOW SALVATION IS OBTAINED.

Salvation is obtained not on the ground of what *we do* for Christ, but on the ground of what *He*

did for us. "By grace are ye saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves, it (salvation) is the gift of God, *not of works lest any man should boast*" (Eph. ii. 8, 9). Salvation is received through believing in Him who loved us and gave Himself for us. It cannot possibly be received through praying, working or renouncing. It is *all* of grace and therefore excludes the thought of merit. "To him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt, but to him that *worketh not*, but *believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly*, his faith is counted for righteousness" (Rom. iv. 4, 5).

Though justification by faith alone is the *professed* creed of Protestantism, it is to be feared that most unsaved Protestants do not really accept it as an article of faith. The common idea is that if a man does "the best he can" he will have a "good chance" of being saved "at last." God's Word, on the contrary, tells us that those who believe on Christ *are* saved (Acts xvi. 31; Rom. x. 9), pardoned (Acts x. 43; Eph. i. 7), justified (Acts xiii. 38, 39; Rom. v. 1), born again (John i. 12, 13), have peace with God (Rom. v. 1), and are possessors of everlasting life (John xxxi. 16-36; v. 24).

PERSONAL TESTIMONY.

Before I was brought to know Christ as my Saviour, I saw from God's Word that salvation was obtained through faith in Christ. I thought I believed on Him, but supposed that I did not believe in the *right way*. I knew that it was *necessary* that Christ should die as an atonement for sin, but I did not understand that what He did was *sufficient*.

One evening I attended an evangelistic service in the city of Glasgow. The preacher, a converted lawyer, showed that all God's claims had been met

by Christ's atonement, and that whosoever believed on Him was saved and had eternal life as a present possession. I was looking *within* being occupied with *my feelings toward God* instead of with *His feelings toward me*. The evangelist emphasised the fact that one must *first* believe on the Lord Jesus and the *feelings will follow*, and repeated again and again the words : "*Believing is the root, feeling is the fruit.*"

The light of the Gospel of Christ shone in on my soul. I believed that God so loved *me* as to give His only begotten Son to die in *my* room and stead. I spoke to the Lord somewhat as follows : "Lord, I do not *feel* that I am saved ; I *know* it because Thou hast said so ; I do not feel any change, but *I will stick to it that I am saved, because Thou hast said so in Thy Word.*" Though I felt no specially joyous emotions that night, a day or two afterwards peace and joy filled my soul. As to *future* sins, Christ died for them, as well as for those that are past, and He has promised to *believers* that "If we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins" (1 John i. 7).

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John iii. 16).

Regeneration : What is it?

By C. H. MACKINTOSH.

THERE are few subjects which have given rise to more difficulty and perplexity than that of regeneration, or the *new birth*. It is to be feared that very much of the misapprehension which prevails in

reference thereto arises from the habit of preaching regeneration and its fruits instead of Christ.

I. What is regeneration? Very many look upon it as a change in the old nature, produced, no doubt, by the influence of the Spirit of God. This change (so they think) is gradual in its operation, and proceeds from stage to stage until the old nature is completely brought under. This view of the subject involves two errors, namely, first, an error as to the real condition of our old nature; and, secondly, as to the distinct personality of the Holy Ghost. It denies the hopeless ruin of nature, and represents the Holy Ghost more as an influence than as a Person.

As to our true state by nature, the word of God presents it as one of total and irrecoverable ruin: "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? (Jer. xvii. 9). "That which is born of the flesh is flesh" (John iii. 6). "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither, indeed, can be" (Rom. viii. 7).

The fact is, the more closely we examine the Word of God, the more we shall see that it is not the divine method to improve a fallen, ruined thing, but to bring in something *entirely new*.

It is of the very last importance to be clear and sound as to this. If I am led to believe that regeneration is a certain change in my old nature, and that this change is gradual in its operation, then, as a necessary consequence, I shall be filled with continual anxiety and apprehension, doubt and fear, depression and gloom, when I discover, as I surely shall, that nature is nature, and will be nought else but nature to the end of the chapter.

Let us then see clearly what regeneration is. It is a *new birth*—the imparting of a *new life*—the

implantation of a *new nature*—the formation of a *new man*. The old nature remains in all its distinctness; and the new nature is introduced in all its distinctness. This new nature has its own habits, its own desires, its own tendencies, its own affections—all these are spiritual, heavenly, divine and partake of the nature of their source. In a word, then, regeneration is God's own work from first to last. God is the Operator; man is the happy, privileged subject.

II. Having endeavoured to show, from various passages of Scripture, that regeneration, or the new birth, is not a change of man's fallen nature, but the imparting of a new, a divine nature, we shall now, in dependence upon the blessed Spirit's teaching, proceed to consider *how* the new birth is produced, how the new nature is communicated.

If my reader will turn to the third chapter of John's Gospel, he will find, in our Lord's interview with Nicodemus, much precious instruction in reference to the mode in which regeneration is produced. Nicodemus held a very high place in what would be termed the religious world. Despite of all his religious advantages, his heart felt a restless craving after something which neither his Pharisaism nor yet the entire system of Judaism could supply. Some are drawn to Jesus by a deep sense of guilt, some by a deep sense of need. Nicodemus, obviously, belongs to the latter class. He had to descend from the lofty heights of Rabbinical learning and traditionary religion, and learn the alphabet of the Gospel in the school of Christ. This was very humiliating to "a man of the Pharisees"—"a ruler of the Jews"—"a master of Israel." There is nothing of which a man is so tenacious as his religion and his learning; and in the case of Nicodemus, it must have sounded passing strange

upon his ear when "a teacher come from God" declared to him, "*Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*"

But it was puzzling as well as humbling. Nicodemus said unto Him, "How can a man be born when he is old?" Jesus answered, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John iii. 5). Here we are distinctly taught that regeneration, or the new birth, is produced by "Water and the Spirit."

It may be, however, that many are at a loss to know what is meant by being "*born of water.*" It is only by comparing Scripture with Scripture that we can ascertain the real sense of any particular passage. What, then, is the meaning of being "born of water"? We must reply by quoting two or three passages from the Word. In the opening of John's Gospel, we read, "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not. But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, but of God" (John i. 11-13). From this passage we learn that every one who believes on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ is born again—born of God. Again, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on Me hath everlasting life" (John vi. 47). "Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live" (John v. 25).

But the reader may feel disposed to enquire, "What has all this to do with the meaning of the word 'water' in John iii. 5?" It has to do with it inasmuch as it shows that the new birth is produced,

the new life communicated, by the voice of Christ, which is, really, the word of God, as we read in the first chapter of James, "Of His own will begat He us with the word of truth" (v. 18). So also in 1 Pet., "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever" (1 Pet. i. 23). In both these passages, the word is expressly set forth as the instrument by which the new birth is produced. James declares that we are begotten "by the word of truth"; and Peter declares that we are "born again by the word of God." If, then, our Lord speaks of "being born of water," it is obvious that He represents the word under the significant figure of "water," a figure which a "Master of Israel" might have understood, had he only studied aright (Ezek. xxxvi. 25-27).

III. We come, now, to consider, in the third and last place, the results of regeneration—a point of the deepest interest. Who can estimate aright the glorious results of being a child of God? Who can unfold those affections which belong to that high and hallowed relationship in which the soul is placed by being born again? The very *moment* a man receives into his heart the simple truth of the Gospel, he becomes a child of God. The truth he receives is the "incorruptible seed" of the "divine nature."

Take the case of the very vilest sinner, who up to this moment has been living a life of gross wickedness. Let that person receive into his heart the pure Gospel of God; let him heartily believe "that Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures," and he there, then, and thus, becomes a child of God, a thoroughly saved, perfectly justified, and

divinely accepted person. In receiving into his heart the simple record concerning Christ, he has received new life. Christ is the truth and the life, and when we receive the truth, we receive Christ; and *when* we receive Christ, we receive life. "He that believeth on the Son *hath* everlasting life" (John iii. 36). When does he get this life? The very *moment* he believes. "Believing ye might have life through His name" (John xx. 31). The truth concerning Christ is the seed of eternal life, and when that truth is believed, life is communicated.

The One Thing Needful

By R. M'ELHERAN, Ballycastle, Ireland.

THERE is no subject in relation to man of greater importance, than that of How and When he may become a child of God. It is of supreme consequence that *you*, reader, should rightly understand this subject in relation to *yourself*. You are a creature born for eternity. You will never cease to exist. Millions upon millions of ages, numerous as the sand upon the sea shore, will not shorten the duration of your everlasting existence. Every day is bringing you nearer to *eternity*. Every beat of the pulse is bringing you nearer to everlasting torment, or to everlasting bliss.

Just think for a moment, you can remember friends, and neighbours, who have died suddenly! You also may die suddenly, and if so, where will you spend eternity? As I write these lines, I am burdened by the thought that *you*, my reader, may be amongst those who shall perish!

You have sinned!

" *All* we like sheep have gone astray ; we have turned every one to his own way " (Isa. liii. 6). " For *All* have *Sinned*, and come short of the glory of God " (Rom. iii. 23). " The Scripture hath concluded *All* under *Sin* " (Gal. iii. 22).

You are guilty!

" Now we know, that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law ; that every mouth may be stopped, and *All the world* may become guilty before God " (Rom. iii. 19).

You have earned sin's wages!

" The soul that sinneth, it shall die " (Ezek. xviii. 20). " For the wages of sin is death " (Rom. vi. 23). And it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment " (Heb. ix. 27). Dear unsaved reader, remember, God hates sin with a perfect hatred. The angels which kept not their first estate were cast down to hell because of Sin ! Death was brought into the world because of Sin ! The old world was destroyed by water because of Sin ! Sodom and Gomorrah was destroyed by fire and brimstone because of Sin ! The city of Jerusalem was destroyed because of Sin ! Israel was scattered among the nations because of Sin ! And the Son of God was crucified because of Sin ! Perhaps Satan and your own deceitful heart is persuading you to think lightly of Sin—that God will overlook it in your case? If so, please remember, God spared not the angels that sinned ! He spared not the old world ! He spared not Sodom and Gomorrah ! He spared not His own Son when *Sin* was laid upon Him ! Neither will He spare those

who die in their sins! I pray you think of the exceeding sinfulness of sin. You will be eternally shut out from the presence of God, *unless you get saved!* Yes, moral though you are! respectable though you are! religious though you are! Without a second birth you cannot see the kingdom of God. It was the loving Saviour who said, "Except a man be *born again*, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John iii. 3). Reader, *are you "born again"?* Yes, or no?

Archibald G. Brown in his booklet, "The Nature and Need of Regeneration,"* says: "Is it not folly for any one *to seek to enter the kingdom of God by the improvement of anything that is the result of the first birth?* If it is so necessary for me to have this *second birth*, what a *madman* I must be to be trying to burnish up or to improve anything that belongs to an earthly nature. It is, 'Except a man be *born again*.' How about the folly of those who think to enter the kingdom by giving a new name to an old nature? The swearer may change his name, and call himself 'Christian,' and the thoughtless may change his name, and call himself 'Church member,' and a clergyman may declare a child a member of Christ by baptism. What does it all avail? It is not the alteration of a name, it is not an old thing by a new term, that God requires. It is a *new thing* altogether."

The late Bishop Ryle, of Liverpool, in his booklet "A New Birth," says: "You may be saved and reach heaven without many things which men reckon of great importance—without riches, without learning, without books, without worldly comforts, without health, without friends—but without a *new birth* you will *never* be saved."

Dear reader, we have tried to show from the

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word of God, the absolute necessity of the *second birth*. We shall now proceed to answer briefly from Holy Scripture the twofold question, "HOW and WHEN," etc. In doing so, we cannot do better than refer the reader to the illustration given by the Lord Jesus in reply to the question asked by Nicodemus: "How can these things be? How can I be born again?" Listen to the Saviour's reply: "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life." "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have *everlasting life*" (John iii. 14-16). "It is the Spirit that quickeneth" (John vi. 63). We are *born again*, not by ordinances, but by the Holy Spirit, by means of the *Word of God*—the Gospel. Paul, in writing to the Christians at Corinth, says: "*For in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the Gospel*" (1 Cor. iv. 15). Here we have the *HOW* of instrumentality in connection with regeneration. So also in the Epistle of James: "Of His own will *begat* he us *with the word of truth*" (chap. i. 18). In the Epistle of Peter we have the same inspired teaching. "Being *born again*, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, *by the Word of God*, which liveth and abideth for ever" (1 Pet. i. 23).

We now come to the question, *WHEN* is this life communicated? We read in the first chapter of John's Gospel: "He came unto His own, and they that were His own received Him not. But as many as *received Him* to them gave He the right to become children of God" (chap. i. 11, 12). "*For ye are all the sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus*" (Gal. iii. 26).

Personal testimony.

I was sprinkled in infancy, confirmed in boyhood, but not until some time afterwards did I hear of my need of a *second birth*. When leaving home to receive a business training, my father said to me : "Robert, should a converted man come along to preach the Gospel, I wish you to go and hear him." I am thankful for having received that loving advice, for in the mercy of God I was permitted to hear *converted men* preach the Gospel, which wrought in me conviction of sin, and a heaven-born desire to be saved. The Holy Spirit who wrought conviction of sin, and revealed to me my helpless and lost condition, also led me to see the rich provision of God's love and grace from that never-to-be-forgotten, sixteenth verse in the third chapter of John's Gospel : "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that *whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have EVERLASTING LIFE.*" Most gladly and thankfully, thirty-five years ago, shortly after midnight, as I lay upon my bed, I was enabled to put my trust in the Lord Jesus Christ to *save me*, and at that moment I "passed from death unto life"—I became a child of God through faith in Christ Jesus.

In conclusion, what more shall I say to you, my dear reader? If unsaved, your need and danger is terrible to contemplate. I pray that *you* also may be enabled to put your trust in the Lord Jesus Christ to *save you*, and so "pass from death unto life." "Neither is there salvation in any other : for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts iv. 12).

The Blessed Experience of Salvation

By Dr. T. NEATBY, London.

NOT only did grace and truth come by Jesus Christ, but He came to give *knowledge* of salvation by the remission of sins. This is not only the richest grace, but it is of deep practical importance. Our responsibility is always according to the position that grace has given us. If we know that we are children of God, we are evidently responsible to walk as His children, *i.e.*, to manifest the relationship in which we stand towards God. The importance is thus seen of "giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." We have the relationship here. We call on the Father, we thank Him for the meetness which is entirely His work : and meetness to partake of all the bright inheritance of the saints in light. There is nothing lacking here : the relationship is known and owned : its blessed liberty too, and the hope it gives (1 John iii. 1-3). There is no uncertainty. The Father is ours, we must walk then as His children. "That ye may be the children of your Father," for the Father is to be known in the child. The walk is thus indicated which befits the relationship. The walk is to show the relationship. It must be a bright reality. We call God "Father" by the Holy Ghost. The witness of the Spirit is that we are the children of God. He says in our hearts, "Abba, Father." He says it not for Himself. He is the eternal God, but He speaks for us, He warrants our cry, "Abba, Father."

Oh, the unspeakable joy of saying by the Holy Spirit, "Abba, Father." It is an established

relationship. It always exists. We can draw upon its resources in every hour of need. It gives holy confidence to the soul. It is the language of the Spirit of God speaking to us within. He bears witness with "our spirit" that we are children of God. No relationship *on paper*, for He feels towards us as a Father, a Father of perfect love, towards children which are before Him, "accepted in the Beloved." This is rest of soul, it is, too, the way of holiness: "a path which the vulture's eye hath not seen." It makes all duty delight, and bond-service perfect liberty. It is the sort of communion we shall enjoy in His presence above, where there is "fulness of joy." It is the will of God we should enjoy it here and now.

Does my reader know personally the Saviour who has brought to us such "grace for grace" as this? Let us look at "John's simple page" where the birth into the family is connected with the full "power, right, or privilege" of children of God (chap. i. 12-18). Here we learn first of all that to "receive" Christ, and to "believe on His name," are practically synonymous terms. This simplicity is of untold value. We "receive" Christ, and all that He is when, as guilty and lost, we "believe on His name," the only name given "whereby we must be saved" (Acts iv. 12). By this birth, by this salvation, we become children of God, are in very deed "born . . . of God." All the privileges connected with this new life are ours as coming direct from God in His sovereignty and His grace. We are born of Him. Not a natural birth, "of blood," not of fleshly energy, not of human will, but "of God." It comes by "the breath of the Lord," soft and gentle (John xx. 22); by the word of God (Jas. i. 18; 1 Pet. i. 23). We find the cleansing, the purity of this birth, in

Ezek. xxxvi., and its living power in Ezek. xxxvii., or the two in a single verse (Titus iii. 5). Reader, is it yours? God be praised if, in humble, adoring love, you can say, Yes!

There may be—there are—great differences in the way this knowledge of salvation is received by the soul and expressed in its experience. What we read of the jailor and of Lydia well illustrates this. No doubt the latter was already a worshipper of the one true God. She needed, however, Christ, and with Him the knowledge of salvation. Of her we read only, “Whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended to the things which were spoken of Paul.” The long looked for Messiah had come, Jesus, who was to “save His people from their sins.” This was like the “dew of Hermon,” and the very water of life to her thirsty soul. Very different was the way of God with the jailor. He must be alarmed by an earthquake, and such an earthquake! Directed and guided by the finger of God to open every door and to loose every man’s bands! Had he heard the singing and the praises to which the earthquake was the answer of God? The prisoners heard, and maybe the jailor too; certainly it was an unusual sound in such a place and under such circumstances. The anxiety of his strange prisoners lest he should add a suicide’s guilt to all his other sins, nay, the thirst for the unhappy man’s salvation wrought a mighty change. He is a seeker of salvation, and, thank God, before morning a *finder*: for “they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house.”

Yes, dear reader, it is by the word of the Lord that this salvation reaches us, that we receive this “knowledge of salvation.” For “faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” That word is now addressed to you. It is “nigh thee.”

Not in heaven that it should be necessary to ascend and bring down Christ: not in the deep that we need to descend and bring Christ from the dead. No, thank God, Christ has been in the depth of our sin and misery, and has satisfied and glorified God about it. God has placed Him at His own right hand where sin cannot be, to attest His satisfaction and His delight in the glorious work which has dealt righteously with sin, and put it away for ever. The word reaches thee from the throne of God, it is very "nigh thee." Listen! "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."

So simple is it. The *work* is done: the *word* is now salvation. Peace *is* made, and God preaches it (Col. i. 20; Acts x. 36). Faith hears: "hear, and your soul shall live"; "Of His fulness have all we received and grace for grace." May this be *thy* happy portion! And NOW!

All Things are of God

By Dr. J. A. OWLES, Brighton.

How? The origin of a person becoming a child of God is in the will of God. "Of His own will begat He us" (James i. 18), and no other will could accomplish it, for we "were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John i. 13). Again the new birth is not only by the will, but it is by the *act* of God, for "the wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth, so is

every one that is born of the Spirit" (John iii. 8). Just as we cannot see the wind, but can only hear, see, or feel its effects, so we cannot see the Spirit's operations in the hearts and consciences of men, but we can judge by its results both in ourselves and others. We are also taught the *means* He uses, thus in a verse already quoted (James i. 18). He "begat us with the word of truth," and there the word *begat* is not the same as is generally employed. It occurs in verse 15 where we read, "sin, when it is finished, *bringeth forth* death." As sin then produces or begetteth death, so the word of truth applied in power by the Holy Spirit begets children of God. Peter uses a compound word, *ana* and *gennao*. In his first Epistle, chap. i. 3, he writes of our being begotten again unto a lively (living) hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. The two disciples in Luke xxiv. 21 said they had trusted that our Lord was He who would have redeemed Israel, but His death had blasted their hope—it was a *dead* hope; now Peter tells of a *living* hope, because He who had died for their sins and effectually atoned for them, lived in heaven, mighty to save, and to bring them to an inheritance there. At the close of chapter i. verse 23, he writes of being "born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever," and in ver. 25 he uses not the word *logos* but *rhema*, "the *word* which by the Gospel is preached unto you." The word therefore is "incorruptible," it has enduring vitality in it, and if sown in the heart to remain, like seed in good soil, it will bring forth fruit. It is important, too, to observe that it is especially the word which by the *Gospel* or the good news is proclaimed, the proclamation of which thus produces life.

We will consider now briefly *when* do persons become the children of God. There is doubtless often a work commenced when God only knows it—a ploughing of the soil preparing for the seed to enter and take root. As one has well said, “the first sigh of a truly penitent sinner is the beginning of an eternal communion with God,” but repentance may be apparent only, not a real turning to God, as in the case of the Thessalonians (1 Thessalonians chap. i. 9, 10), so that we can be sure that we or others possess life only when there is faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

In John i. 12, “As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name.” John iii. 36: “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life, and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.” In 1 John v. 12: “He that hath the Son, hath life; and he that hath not the Son, hath not life.” There may be much in the flesh that is pleasing, but “that which is born of the flesh, is flesh” after all (John iii. 6), and however moral or religious such people are, they are not children of God. The circumstances leading to conversion differ much, so that we should not attempt to define what God has left indefinite.

The jailor, at Philippi, and his house were convicted, converted, and, as believers, baptized in one night (Acts xvi. 23). Saul of Tarsus was blind for three days, and “neither did eat, nor drink” (Acts ix. 9).

The Bereans examined the Scriptures *daily*, and “therefore, many of them believed” (Acts xvii. 12-14, R.V.). The Eunuch failed to find in worship at Jerusalem satisfaction for heart or conscience, but on his return journey, when reading

in Isa. liii. of a suffering Saviour, Philip being sent by the Spirit preached to him Jesus (Acts viii. 27-35). Thus it is still, we have known some in anxiety of soul for months and even years. Others attend a meeting in utter carelessness of soul, and leave it rejoicing in the Lord, afterwards proving their conversion by many years service for Christ. As it has been suggested that I should add a word of my own experience, I will conclude by stating that I was an earnest inquirer as a boy, then a religious formalist struggling against sin and worldliness, until as a young man I heard clear statements of truth, and *knew* that I had eternal life because I believed on the name of the Son of God (1 John v. 13). Through grace, I have not doubted this for forty-five years.

The Obedience of Faith

By Dr. A. T. PIERSON, Brooklyn, New York.

“What saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation” (Rom. x. 8-10).

THIS comes about midway in the Epistle to the Romans, which is especially the *Epistle of salvation*. And here we are told that the “Word of Faith,” that is the substance of the whole message addressed to faith, is “Believe with the heart, and confess with the mouth” and “thou shalt be saved.”

If we look at the beginning and at the close of this same Epistle, we shall find a brief expression

of great importance, "*the obedience of faith*" (i. 5 ; xvi. 26). The phrase is precisely the same in both places, and should be rendered alike in both ; and it supplies a key to the meaning of the message of Faith in chapter x.

There are two words in this phrase, *Faith* and *Obedience* ; when they are in right relations, salvation is ours. And we shall now consider briefly how the obedience of Faith fixes the *time* of salvation, defines the *terms* of salvation, and supplies the *test* of salvation.

1. The *Time*. Faith leads to obedience, and obedience springs from faith, and therefore they belong together and are really two sides or aspects of one experience.

Faith is such an acceptance of the Gospel message as leads to a reception of the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord.

Whenever the truth about salvation brings a soul to *take* Him as Saviour, salvation is ours that very moment.

Now, receiving or taking is a very simple act, like reaching out the hand, but it is an act, and the will is at the back of it, and hence it implies and is obedience.

If we study the cases of conversion in the New Testament, we shall find that all of them are examples of the obedience of faith. Our Lord called Simon Peter and Andrew, his brother, saying, "Follow Me," and they arose and followed Him ; likewise He called James and John, and they likewise left the ship and their father and obeyed ; and so Levi, or Matthew, at His call, left his bench as a tax receiver. He told the woman at the well that she might have the living water for the *asking*, and she asked and received ; but the asking was the obedience of faith. Paul told the jailor at

Philippi to believe, and he believed and was saved "that same hour of the night."

Christ told Nicodemus, he must be born again from above. No man can, of himself, be born anew any more than control his first birth; and to some people the new birth is a stumbling block, it seems to make them helpless, but if they would look back to chap. i. 11, 12, 13, they would find that even regeneration hangs on the obedience of faith: "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not. But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, *even* to them that believe on His name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John i. 11-13).

Here, to all who "*receive* Him," "even to them that *believe* on His name," He gives power, or the right, to become the sons of God; and all such are born of God, so that though we cannot cause the new birth in ourselves, we can, by the obedience of faith, become its subjects.

2. The obedience of faith likewise determines the *terms* of salvation, embracing all that is necessary to make it available.

Two things in us hinder our harmony with God; one is the *guilt of sin*, and the other is *perversity of Spirit*. We have transgression, and transgression demands penalty; we have a sinful nature, and that nature needs a radical change. When we believe on Him who bore our sins on the tree, faith so unites us to Him that our sins are reckoned to His account, and the righteousness of God to ours; somewhat as a debt is reckoned to him who pays it, and his payment credited to the man who owes it. And when we *obey*, the will that has been opposed to God yields to Him, and, as the will is the centre of our whole being, obedience

implies the reception of a new nature, making harmony with God possible.

When Saul, on the way to Damascus, saw the risen Lord, he at once said, " Lord, *what wilt Thou have me to do?* " That was the obedience of faith ; believing Christ to be risen from the dead, he ceased to oppose, and from that moment began to follow and serve Him. And so his message of faith to all men is, " Believe that God hath raised Him from the dead "—that is faith ; and " confess Jesus as Lord," or Master, sovereign of your whole being—that is obedience. Thus sin is cleansed, and the heart is changed, a new nature imparted.

3. The obedience of faith suggests the *test* of salvation. And faith that does not lead to obedience, or any obedience that does not come from faith, is not saving.

Faith is not, therefore, merely assenting with the mind to a doctrine or a fact. " The devils also believe and tremble " ; they do not *obey* or yield. They remain just as disobedient and rebellious notwithstanding their belief. Nor is that a saving obedience which is not the fruit of faith. There may be an obedience like that of the Pharisee, that is most particular about the least things of the law, but covers a heart that hates God, and seeks to *earn* salvation by good works. Such obedience may therefore be a real disobedience to God, in rejecting His Son. On the other hand, when obedience comes from faith, it is really faith in action.

Many years ago, an Englishman, happening to be in Charleston, South Carolina, and seeing a slave being sold, bought and gave him money to begin life in the north as a free man. The purchased slave henceforth refused to leave his purchaser, but became his voluntary servant. Here was an

obedience that was the fruit of redemption. He did not offer it to *secure* his freedom, but in gratitude for a free gift of liberty. When we *obey*, not to merit justification, but because of grateful love for a redemption that cost the Lord Jesus everything, but cost us nothing, then we learn what is the obedience of faith.

So simple and plain then is salvation to a *willing* soul. A little child, who had found it by this short and simple path, was warned by an old man who had come to the cross after long despairing struggles, that perhaps her way was too easy. "Why," said he, "you do not seem to have been in the Slough of Despond!" She only dropped a courtesy, and said, "Please sir, *I did not come that way.*" Nor need any of us, if we only believe like a child that God means what He says, and at once come to the cross for eternal life!

How I was Born of God, or How I Tried the Five C's

By HY. PICKERING

Editor of "The Witness"

MY first trial, or, to speak more correctly, the trial of a loved mother to make sure that her darling boy was all right for Heaven, was when, as a little crying babe, I was CHRISTENED in an old-fashioned English Church on the outskirts of Newcastle-on-Tyne. My parents were led to believe, and in Day and Sunday School I was taught, that "in my baptism I was made a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven." No greater fallacy was ever foisted on

respectable people, for neither by the sprinkling of children nor the immersion of adults did one soul ever become "an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven." God has declared that "without the shedding of blood there is no remission" (Heb. ix. 22). With all a mother's good intentions, I was as much a "child of wrath" (Eph. ii. 3), as the darkest heathen in darkest Africa.

My next trial heavenward was induced by the schoolmaster asking one day if any of us boys would like to join the Church CHOIR. Clothed in white surplices, seated in the chancel, singing the praises of Jehovah, the white-robed choristers had often stirred the desire in my heart "to be an angel, and with the angels stand." Never shall I forget that fateful Thursday evening, when on giving a display of my musical abilities, I was promptly placed amongst those "cast out," and all hope of heaven by way of the choir was gone. Yet such only added to the joy of learning years after—when thinking of the blood-washed "choir of glory"—that Jesus said, "Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out" (John vi. 37). Melodiously musical, or miserably unmusical, all may be welcomed, re-created, moulded, and "made meet" for the endless glory song of the ransomed: "Unto Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever" (Rev. i. 5, 6).

When fourteen years of age, the schoolmaster again enquired if any of us boys would care to be CONFIRMED, as the Bishop of Durham was to hold a Confirmation Service in a neighbouring church. A few of us attended the Rectory for examination and were asked questions from the Catechism. No Bible was opened, no suggestion was made of our being "condemned already" (John

iii. 36), of the absolute necessity of "being born again" (John iii. 3), of the simplicity of a present and purchased salvation (Acts xvi. 31). We went forward as we had seen hundreds of others, the Lord Bishop prayed, "Ever living God, who hast vouchsafed to *REGENERATE* these Thy servants by Water and the Holy Ghost, and has given unto them the *forgiveness of their sins*," etc., crossed his hands, and laid one on "the head of every one severally . . . to certify them of Thy favour and gracious goodness to them." I left the impressive service under the conviction that in some undefined way, I had moved a step nearer the kingdom of heaven. Had anyone seen a few of us the latter part of that day, it would have been quite apparent that the Bishop's hands had effected no change, and that we were still manifestly "on the broad road to everlasting woe." Neither that of Apostle, Bishop, Minister, Deacon, or other *human* hand can usurp the prerogative of the peerless Son of God, who alone can give eternal life (John x. 28), and dispense effectual blessing (Eph. iv. 8).

The rule being that "there shall none be admitted to the Holy Communion, until such time as he be confirmed," I was now a proper subject for "Holy COMMUNION." A book giving instructions to young communicants was handed to most of those who had been confirmed, but there was no personal dealing as to the significance and solemnity of the ordinance. Without any pretence to being regenerated I was free to take "Holy Communion," at which it is said, "then we spiritually eat the flesh of Christ and drink His blood; then we *dwell in Christ* and Christ in us; we are *one with Christ* and Christ with us." Like myriads more, as an unconvicted, unconverted sinner, I was "eating and drinking judgment to myself" (1 Cor. xi. 29).

A corpse at a feast ; a Church member, but not a member of " the Church " (Acts ii. 47) ; a professor without real possession, a deceived soul " in danger of eternal damnation " (Mark iii. 29).

Last of all, and best of all, I found CHRIST (John i. 41). From my youth upward, I had been a devout attender at " Divine Service," a strict teetotaler, and non-smoker, yet I felt there was one thing lacking. What was it?

Meetings were commenced in a farmer's barn by a preacher who made no pretence at eloquence, wore no surplice, used no paper, and feared no man. The first night he preached from the text, " The wicked shall be turned into hell " (Ps. ix. 17). It was resented. The heathen might need such texts, but decent church members were entirely different. Yet conscience answered, " Unregenerate churchman, it is true of you." The nights following a clear testimony was given as to the truth that " All have sinned " ; " There is none righteous, no, not one " ; " Without faith it is impossible to please God " ; " To him that worketh not but believeth, his faith is counted for righteousness " ; " He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life " (Rom. iii. 23 ; Rom. iii. 10 ; Heb. xi. 6 ; Rom. iv. 5 ; John iii. 36). Realising that I had the shadow without the substance, religion without the Redeemer, I sat a hopeless, helpless sinner, anxious to be saved. The preacher put the matter like this : " If you had been the only person who had ever lived, and Christ had died, as He could not die for His own sin, He must have *died for you*." A glimmer of heavenly light shone into my soul. He continued, " As if you had been the only person who had ever lived, stand by faith before the cross of Calvary, gaze on the dying Lamb of God, say in your heart, ' The Son of God who loved *me*, and

gave Himself *for me*' (Gal. ii. 20), and you will be saved." Acting on the advice, in desperate earnestness, I closed my eyes, clenched my fists, and from my heart said, "SINK OR SWIM, JUST NOW I'LL TRUST HIM." There and then, sitting on a wooden plank in a farmer's barn that cold night of November, 1874, I realised that :

"Soon as my all I ventured
On the atoning Blood,
The Holy Spirit entered,
And I was born of God."

John v. 24 became my birthday text as I learned its five golden links : "He that (1) *heareth* My word, and (2) *believeth* on Him that sent Me, (3) *hath* everlasting life, and (4) *shall not* come into condemnation, but (5) *is passed* from death unto life." I had heard, I believed, I passed from death unto life, I possessed eternal life, and I should never come into condemnation.

Although cast out from the Church Choir as unmusical, that night I ceased not to make melody in my heart, as I repeated over and over again :

"I've received Him,
And He's received me;
The torment and the fire
Mine eyes shall never see."

Well nigh forty years of happy experience of the reality of regeneration leads me joyfully to witness that "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that Day."

Strive to Enter in at the Strait Gate

By E. E. PICKARD, Sevenoaks.

How and when do persons become children of God? Reader, here are two questions which are of the utmost importance to everybody, and, consequently, to *you*. I propose to answer them as clearly and concisely as I can.

It will be well, in the first place, to clear away some of the mistaken ideas which so many serious and well-meaning persons have with reference to this subject.

At the very outset let us be quite clear that Holy Scripture and that alone *must* be our guide.

Now, Scripture never teaches either directly or indirectly that persons are made children of God by baptism, notwithstanding that many persons have an idea that it is so, and 1 Pet. iii. 21 is quoted as supporting this view, but the words, "Not the putting away of the filth of the flesh" which occur in the same verse, show that outward baptism with water cannot put away sin (see also Heb. ix. 22).

Then, again, we *cannot* become children of God by good works of any kind (see Rom. iii. 28).

So, too, with religious observances, such as prayers, alms, vows, penances, and so forth; they are all insufficient for this end. Indeed, all these things are actually distasteful to God, if offered by those who are not already children of God.

How and *when* then does this blessed change take place?

For, notice, there *must* be a change in every human being who would become a child of God, for the Scripture says, we are all "by nature the children of wrath" (Eph. ii. 3). Therefore, we

"*must* be born again" (John iii. 3) if we are even to *see* the kingdom of God.

Let us now look at the first chapter of the Gospel by St. John. In verses 12, 13, we read: "As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name: which were born," etc. We see here that in order to become a child of God, *a man must receive the Lord Jesus by believing in His name*. This belief does not mean a mere abstract faith in the "Historic Christ," but a *personal* appropriation of the Christ of God, once dead, now living. This cannot be experienced apart from the Holy Spirit who convicts of sin and shows the need of a Saviour.

Probably my reader has at times felt the Holy Spirit striving with his conscience to convict him of sin and its unhappy consequences (Rom. v. 12; John xvi. 8). It is deeply important not to resist the Holy Spirit (Acts vii. 51), but to yield to His convicting voice. But it is not enough to be convicted of sin; another step is needed. You have heard that the Lord Jesus Christ "was delivered for our offences and was raised again for our justification" (Rom. iv. 25). You admit that He has thus proved both His power and willingness to save from death and impart a new life—even eternal life to all who believe.

If you have followed me thus far, dear reader, I have only a little more to say. The matter now rests entirely with you. You need to take a definite step of faith and receive Christ as your own personal Saviour. When you do thus *receive Him* you become at that very moment a child of God.

If you reject, nay even if you neglect Him, how will you escape? Be not deceived either by the traditions of men or by your own natural thoughts,

but let the precious Word of God be your guide, and then the matter will become clear and simple.

I will now give you as far as possible, in order, a little of my own experience, and I pray God it may help you to become a child of God, if you are not already one.

Many years ago, when quite a young man, I was laid upon a bed of sickness for nearly two years. My life was despaired of. Many times my friends stood around my bed weeping and bidding me good-bye. In those days I did not know God savingly, and if I had died I would certainly have perished. On partially recovering, however, on a certain never-to-be-forgotten day an awful sense of my sinful state and danger came over me. As I lay there wearily resting my head, I seemed to see the very mouth of Hell opening beneath me. I was so deeply impressed and solemnized by this experience that I obtained a small book of private prayers, three prayers for each day in the month, and O how I tried to persevere and pray from this book. But alas ! the more I prayed the farther I seemed to get away from God. The prayers, moreover, did not seem to suit my case at all, so that I soon gave them up in despair.

After my recovery I obtained employment amongst some very ungodly men who, by their evil influence, soon caused me to forget my prayers and the need of my soul, and I fell into deeper sin than ever. After a time the Holy Spirit began to show me myself and to strive mightily with me. How loving and faithful is the blessed Spirit of God ! I had no peace night or day for many weary months, and although I went to various Churches and Chapels I could find no rest nor ground of hope.

It was not very long before my health again broke down, so that I was once more laid low and became

almost distracted. God only knows the darkness and despair of those awful days. Silently in the night and when alone in the day, I would weep because of my hopeless efforts to rid me of my sins and "become good." Oh, how I pleaded with God to make me good. How I longed to forget my past life, but in vain; all was black despair.

One afternoon, whilst on my knees silently weeping and praying, a text of Scripture which I had learned in my childhood at Sunday School flashed into my mind, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." I saw in an instant that I had been looking the wrong way. I had been looking *in* and *down*. Now I looked *out* and *up*. How can I forget that solemn, happy hour! I now wept for very joy. I had found pardon, peace, and power. I saw that my trust must be in Another, even Jesus, and I knew within myself that I was His (Rom. viii. 15). I no longer needed a "Prayer Book," nor have I ever used one since.

It is many years ago now since that "Happy day," and much has happened in the meantime, but I have proved the truth of those blessed words: "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." Reader, you also may become a child of God, but are you willing?

The Royal Family

By Dr. RYLE, late Bishop of Liverpool.

IT is reckoned an honour in this world to belong to a royal family. But it is an honour beyond the reach of most people. There are many poor on earth. There are few kings.

But there is a dignity which the poorest man in the world may attain to. Reader, that dignity may become your own this very day. You may join the family of Him who is King of kings and Lord of lords. You may become a member of Christ and a child of God. This is the honour of all true Christians—they are the sons of God.

But HOW can sinful men like you and me become sons of God? WHEN do they enter into this glorious relationship? We are not the sons of God by nature. We are not born so when we come into the world. No man has a natural right to look to God as his Father. It is a vile heresy to say that he has. Men are said to be born poets and painters, but men are never born sons of God. The Epistle to the Ephesians tells us: "Ye were by nature children of wrath, even as others" (Eph. ii. 3).

Yes! we are all rather children of the devil than children of God. Sin is indeed hereditary, and runs in the family of Adam. Grace is anything but hereditary, and holy men have not, as a matter of course, holy sons. *How* then and *When* does this mighty change and translation come upon men? When and in what manner do sinners become the sons and daughters of the Lord God Almighty?

Men become sons of God in the day that the Spirit leads them to believe on Jesus Christ for salvation, and not before. What says the Epistle to the Galatians? "Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus" (Gal. iii. 36). What says the Gospel of John? "As many as received Him (Christ), to them gave He power (or privilege) to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name" (John i. 12).

Reader, this is one of those points you should never forget. You and I know nothing of a man's

sonship *until he believes*. No doubt the sons of God are foreknown and chosen from all eternity, and predestinated to adoption. But remember, it is not till they are called in due time and believe; it is not till then that you and I can be certain they are sons. It is not till they repent and believe, that the angels of God rejoice over them. The angels cannot read the book of God's election. They know not who are His hidden ones in the earth. They rejoice over no man till he believes. But when they see some poor sinner repenting and believing then there is joy among them—joy that one more brand is plucked from the burning, and one more son and heir born again to the Father in heaven. But once more I say, you and I know nothing certain about a man's sonship to God until he believes in Christ.

Reader, I warn you to beware of the delusive notion that all men and women are alike children of God, whether they have faith in Christ or not. It is a wild theory which many are clinging to in these days, but one which cannot be proved out of the Word of God. It is a perilous dream, with which many are trying to soothe themselves, but one from which there will be a fearful waking up by-and-bye. Where there is no faith in Christ, it is drivelling folly to say that a man may take comfort in God as his Father. God is a reconciled Father to none but the members of Christ.

Reader, once more I warn you to beware of this theology. I charge you to hold fast the doctrine which I have been endeavouring to uphold in this tract. Remember what I have said and never let it go. No inheritance of glory without sonship to God! No sonship to God without an interest in Christ! No interest in Christ without your own personal faith! This is God's truth. Never forsake it.

Who now among my readers desires to know whether he is a son of God? Ask yourself this day, and ask it as in God's sight, whether you have repented and believed. Ask yourself whether you are experimentally acquainted with Christ and united to Him in heart. If not, you may be very sure you are no son of God. You are not yet born again. You are yet in your sins. Yes! though Church and world may agree to tell you to the contrary, though clergy and laity unite in flattering you, let God be true and every man a liar. Without faith in Christ you are no son of God—you are not born again.

Who is there among the readers of this tract that is a son of God indeed? Rejoice, I say, and be exceeding glad of your privileges. Rejoice, for you have good cause to be thankful. Remember the words of the beloved Apostle: "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God" (1 John iii. 1). How wonderful that heaven should look down on earth, that the Holy God should set His affections on sinful man, and admit him into His family! What though the world does not understand you! What though the men of this world laugh at you, and cast out your name as evil! Let them laugh if they will; God is your Father. You have no need to be ashamed. The Queen can create a nobleman. The Bishops can ordain a clergyman. But Queen, Lords, and Commons, Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, all together cannot of their own power make one son of God, or one of greater dignity than a son of God. The man that can call God his Father, that man may be poor and lowly, yet he never need be ashamed.

Jesus Only

By Dr. E. B. ROCHE, Norwich.

THE statement of the Lord Jesus to Nicodemus was absolute. "Ye must be born again." The natural birth was clearly understood to be the first birth, and a new and spiritual birth was declared to be the absolute necessity for "seeing the kingdom of God." The example given in the person of Nicodemus, a man of the highest type religiously and morally, settles for ever the question of any personal or religious advantage or qualification. "There is no difference." "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. iii. 22, 23). God's way is the way of grace. Grace is free, unmerited favour. "For by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph ii. 8, 9).

In the fulness of time, and in the Person of the Son, the Saviour, according to promise and prophecy, was born into the world at Bethlehem. His birth and life, His ways and His words, are recorded for us in the Gospels. There we see that "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not." Having lived His life of love and mercy, wrought His miracles of life and healing, preached righteousness, and denounced sin, He declared Himself "The Way, the Truth, and the Life."

His life and public testimony ended at the cross of Calvary. There the spotless Lamb of God appeared once to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. God's justice in punishing sin, and His

love for lost and helpless sinners were fully manifested in grace, and expressed in the Person and sacrifice of His beloved Son.

“ Because the sinless Saviour died
My sinful soul is counted free ;
For God, the Just, is satisfied
To look on Him and pardon me.”

He died and was laid in the tomb. On the third day He rose from the dead according to the Scriptures, God thus bearing witness to His perfect acceptance of the sacrifice. The Lord Jesus Christ having perfectly accomplished the will of God becomes the only way of salvation, the only object for our faith. Yes, it is through faith in Christ that a sinner can and must be saved. We must receive the testimony of God concerning Christ, and, believing His finished work to be the only way, trust Him for salvation as helpless sinners. When a sinner takes this step he passes “from death unto life,” or, in other words, is “born again” into the family of God. He is saved with an everlasting salvation, and has “peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

The word of the living God is our guide and instructor in all this. In it God reveals my sin ; foretells and forth-tells the only way of safety, declares His love, grace, and holiness in perfection, and proclaims peace and pardon through the work finished on the cross ; He beseeches the guilty sinner to come to God in the only possible way, and assures him of full and free salvation at once through the sacrifice accomplished by the blessed One who was God manifest in the flesh. “Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree” (1 Pet. ii. 24). “For He hath made Him

to be sin for us, who knew no sin ; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him " (2 Cor. v. 21). It is the happy privilege of all who are truly saved to know the blessed fact. Many can tell the exact time and circumstance of their "passing from death unto life." Many, however, from various causes cannot so fix the time "when," but are as sure of their second birth as they are of their first. They know they have come into the world, and they also know they are trusting in the finished work of Christ, and that they are alive unto God through Him.

"The Spirit witnesseth with our spirit that we are the children of God." If we are such, it should be not only confessed with our mouths but manifested in our lives. Men hear our professions, and watch our life. These two should correspond. The Lord Jesus is my Saviour from the power of sin as well as from its penalty. Salvation from the guilt of sin with its penalty, gives me peace of conscience. Salvation from sin's power gives me rest and increasing joy in communion. Salvation from the presence of sin I shall only know when I am with Him in the glory. To make me like His dear Son is God's purpose for me, and should increasingly be the desire of my heart. If anyone professes to be a child of God, and excuses or lives in known sin, presuming on a salvation once professed, he is turning the grace of God into lasciviousness, and should be solemnly warned that a mere barren profession without any evidence of possession is not the new life. "The Lord knoweth them that are His, and let them that name the name of Christ depart from iniquity."

The "how" of salvation is quite clear, but if you have any doubt of your salvation because you cannot say "when," then on the grounds of God's

blessed provision and your own deep need come at once and let your "When" be "Now."

"Now is the accepted time; behold now is the day of salvation."

"Come, for all things are now ready."

A Soldier's Testimony

By Lieut.-Col. F. ROBERTS, London.

CHRISTENDOM contains two classes of people—"Believers" and "Unbelievers" (John iii. 36). Two reasons may be adduced why many fail to belong to the former.

1. *A want of knowledge as to what sin is and does.* Many people who make but little or no profession of Christianity attain to a high standard of outward morality, their integrity, viewed from a human standpoint, being practically unimpeachable. To such, the words "All have sinned" (Rom. iii. 23), have little or no meaning. They fail to see that of every individual not keeping God's commandments *perfectly*, it is written, "Cursed is everyone that continueth not in *all things* which are written in the book of the law to do them" (Gal. iii. 10). Pride—in many cases unconscious—is the dominant feature of this class. A step further leads to the outward denial of the necessity of the Atonement and the Deity of the Lord Jesus—Hence Unitarianism.

2. *Erroneous teaching.* This may be of two kinds—either an addition to, or a taking away from, God's Word. Sacerdotalists do both. They introduce many ordinances which are quite repugnant to the Scriptures, and at the same time deny the truth of many precious promises to the effect that a

believer on the Lord Jesus may *know to a certainty* that his sins have been pardoned, and that he is the happy possessor of eternal life.

These things have I written unto you who believe on the name of the Son of God that ye may *know* that ye have *eternal life* (1 John v. 13). This "belief" is far more than an intellectual assent to the truths of Christianity. The Greek word translated "believe" is frequently rendered "commit unto" *e.g.*, "a dispensation of the Gospel is *committed unto me*" (1 Cor. ix. 17). "Jesus did not *commit Himself unto them*" (John ii. 24). Hence to believe on the Lord Jesus means that we definitely commit (or give in charge) our souls to His keeping, solely relying on the fact (1 Peter ii. 24) that "His own Self bare our sins in His own body on the tree," and at the same time repudiate any merits of our own. The consequence of thus believing is that (*e*), "as many as received Him, to them gave He the power ('right' or 'privilege') to become the sons of God, even to them that *believe* on His name, which were born, not of blood . . . but of God" (John i. 12, 13). The new birth here mentioned is the direct action of the Holy Spirit as explained to Nicodemus by the Lord Jesus (John iii. 3-8) thus: (*f*) "Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God . . . Every one that is born of the Spirit." This last sentence proves that the Holy Spirit *alone* is the Author of the "New birth," and hence the water previously mentioned in connection with Him must be taken figuratively. It may symbolise the Holy Scriptures as in 1 Pet. i. 23. It cannot possibly refer to Christian baptism, which was not instituted till long after the conversation narrated in John iii. The child of God, trusting in the fact that the Lord Jesus has

atoned for his sin, and being "born again" by the operation of the Holy Spirit, can now rest tranquilly on the testimony of the Scriptures, that (g) "He that believeth on the Son *hath* everlasting life" (John iii. 36). "We *know* that we have passed from death unto life . . ." (1 John iii. 14; v. 13). There is surely no presumption in believing what God's Word declares.

Many people who make a profession of religion through having been constrained to join in Church membership, lack altogether the knowledge of sins forgiven, and the assurance of salvation. They can bear no testimony to the saving power of the Lord Jesus Christ. They have no joy in the prospect of His early return for His saints, and they view with a dread uncertainty the approach of death. The narration of an incident in connection with this point may perhaps prove helpful. A few weeks after my conversion to God—now many years ago—I was sent for one evening urgently to visit a dying woman, a stranger. She proved to be intelligent and well educated. She was suffering from an internal complaint which was certain to prove fatal within a day or two. She was perfectly clear in her mind, but in a state of soul distress that was most painful to witness. She knew not where she was going, and her regular minister had failed to soothe her agitation. A few questions elicited her spiritual history. Well-disposed from childhood, she had passed through the routine of Sunday School and Church membership. Sorrowfully but freely she acknowledged herself to be a sinner in God's sight. She put forward no plea of self-justification, and was evidently trusting in a general sort of way in the fact that the Lord Jesus had died to save sinners like herself, but there was a complete absence of a *conscious personal* interest in the atoning work

of the Saviour. She knew nothing experimentally of what is meant by passing "from death unto life" (John v. 24). As a young convert, my knowledge of the Scriptures as a whole was extremely limited, but I knew what they contained on the subject of the absolute security of believers, and I was enabled to point her to Him who came to save the *individual* sinner, and very soon she rested *definitely* on His all-sufficient sacrifice. She then drank in eagerly the God-given promises (such as John iii. 36; vi. 37) to those who receive the Saviour, and in less than half an hour the storm had subsided, and a face radiant with joy testified to a newly found peace. On calling the next evening—I could not do so earlier—I found she had just passed away most triumphantly. Her daughters told me that she had declined to see anyone on spiritual matters after my visit, saying that I had told her exactly what she wanted to know. A *knowledge* of salvation, as explained above, was all the poor soul needed.

"THESE THINGS HAVE I WRITTEN UNTO YOU THAT BELIEVE ON THE NAME OF THE SON OF GOD; THAT YE MAY *KNOW* THAT YE HAVE ETERNAL LIFE" (1 John v. 13).

Believing and Having

By JAMES L. STANLEY, Bristol.

THE notion that all men, without distinction, are the children of God is very common and popular, but is very contrary to Scripture. In John i. 12, 13, it is said, "As many as received Him, to them

gave He the right to become children of God, even to them that believe on His name : which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God " (R.V.). If the relationship of " children " be the common property of all men, how can our Lord confer it as a privilege? Evidently this relationship belongs to a particular class, and this is confirmed by other passages of the Word of God, such as 1 John iii. 1. Note the distinction between " the children of God " and the " world." Clearly " the children of God " are a class of persons separate from " the world." Now, *How* is the relationship entered upon? The words of John i. 12, 13 give us a definite answer. They show us (1) that it is not by natural birth, "*not of blood*"; (2) that it is not of the effort of the natural will, "*not of the will of the flesh*"; (3) that it is not by influence brought to bear by others, "*nor of the will of man.*"

Having shown how it is *not* entered into, the words show us with equal clearness how it is entered into. It is a privilege bestowed by Christ upon those who "*receive Him.*" And if it be asked, What is meant by receiving Him? the answer is found in the same verse, " Even to them that believe on His name." To believe on Christ, and to receive Christ mean the same thing. But what is meant by *believing on Him*? Observe, it does not mean believing things or statements *about* Him. You may believe everything that is written *about* Him, and yet undergo no spiritual change, or change in your relationship to God. This believing on Christ means an *act of trust* in Him, the committing of yourself entirely to Him for salvation. Imagine that you want to cross the Atlantic. You are recommended to go by a certain steamer : you are told it is perfectly safe and seaworthy : you pro-

fess to believe the correctness of these statements concerning the vessel, but at the same time you decline altogether to set foot on board it. Evidently, though you *profess* to believe, you do not *really* believe. What would furnish proof that you *really* believed? Why your action in embarking upon the vessel, and setting forth for America. So is it in regard to our Lord Jesus Christ, it is only when you do with the whole consent of your soul trust in Him, commit yourself to Him for salvation, that you gain acceptance with God, and become a child of God. And this is not a *figurative* relationship but a *real* one. In 1 John iii. 1, we read, "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God," and the R.V. adds, "*and such we are.*" And further, this change is the result of a *new birth* as set forth in John iii. 3-8. A new life is imparted by the Spirit of God, and those who become the subjects of this new birth are made partakers of a new nature (2 Pet. i. 4).

Our duty is to believe the Gospel; God's work is to regenerate the soul that thus believes. We see then *How* we become children of God. But *When* do we become children of God? What has been said already, will furnish almost a complete answer to this question. Yet, the thought may linger in some minds that this blessing is not one of present possession and enjoyment, but only to be entered upon when this life is over. Now while *full* knowledge and enjoyment lie in the future, it is abundantly clear from Scripture that this blessing is to be possessed and enjoyed *now*. We become the children of God *when* we believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. The Apostle John says in 1 John iii. 2: "Beloved, *now* are we children of God." And that "*now*" means the present

time, is made very clear by the distinction between "now" and "what we shall be." Again, it is written, "Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus" (Gal. iii. 26)—notice, "*are*," not, shall be hereafter. The Apostle John says, "We know that we have passed from death unto life" (1 John iii. 14). The same strong confidence pervades all the writings of the Apostle Paul; see for example, Eph. ii. 13: "But *now* in Christ Jesus, ye who sometimes were far off *are* made nigh by the blood of Christ." Notice the words "*now*" and "*are*."

And what the Word of God so clearly teaches is amply confirmed by the experiences of all true believers. Multitudes can testify that their reception of Christ by faith, has been followed by the rest and peace of assurance. Over forty-eight years ago, when quite a lad, I was deeply concerned about my own salvation. Like very many more, I was seeking salvation, though unconsciously, by the works of the law. At last my eyes were opened to see that by the deeds of the law no flesh could be justified (Rom. iii. 23), and that all my endeavours to obtain salvation by good works must end in failure. Then I saw the meaning of those words of our Lord Jesus Christ, "It is finished." I saw that He had done everything necessary for my salvation. He had satisfied on the cross all the claims of God against me as a sinner, by bearing my sins and enduring the full penalty. God was satisfied, and I could be, and ought to be, satisfied too. Here my soul found rest, I was assured of my acceptance with God, and have been assured of it ever since. Surely there must be some divine reality in a conviction which can live on thus for forty-eight years, and there are many who can testify of a much longer experience. The Apostle John

says, "These things have I written unto you, *that you may know that ye have eternal life*, even unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God" (1 John v. 13). What was possible *then* is possible *now*. May it be so, reader, in your experience.

A Testimony from Switzerland

By S. SQUIRE, Lausanne.

IT is a matter of eternal importance to belong to the heavenly family.

The NEW BIRTH although entirely the act of God by the Spirit, takes place, however, in connection with the reception of Christ by faith.

I distinctly remember the time, the manner, and the place where the divine life was imparted to me.

My father was a heavenly minded man, preaching a pure Gospel in season, and out of season. Our house was the frequent resort of preachers. Although I knew exactly what the Gospel was, the more I heard it faithfully proclaimed, the more I felt miserable, and many a time at night, I was so afraid to go to sleep, lest I should wake up in hell, that I tried my very best to keep awake. Many times my good father invited me to shut myself up in my room, and not to leave it before I was really saved, but to no purpose.

One day, a dear old preacher paid us a visit, and I had to accompany him to a meeting in the next village at about half-an-hour's distance. After a little time, he turned to me and put the question, "Are you a member of the great family of God's children?" That question was like a mighty arrow from God's quiver, and I had to confess I was outside that blessed family, but that I was intensely

desiring to enter it. This godly man explained simply to me the way of salvation.

I remember to this day how I rejoiced to know my sins had been borne upon the cross by another, the Lord Jesus Christ. I knew they would no more be a source of condemnation to me, as the Lord Jesus had fully borne the righteous indignation of a holy God on account of them.

I was fifteen years of age, and went to school at the time. For a few weeks I had a joy in my heart never experienced before, and the Saviour became a living, loving Person always by my side. The fear of hell disappeared, and the joy of the Saviour's presence took its place.

Since then, my experiences have varied, but the assurance of having been received into the family of God has never left me. I must confess that my fellowship with God was sometimes interrupted, so much so that at one time when in London I had a terrible experience, I felt as though I had been forsaken of God. I do not wish anyone to pass through such a time. Oh! the anguish, the horror of feeling oneself sliding away from Him for ever! May it never be your experience, dear reader.

I knew that I had sinned, and I confessed it, and He restored my soul. The good Shepherd took His sheep in hand, and bestowed pardon and peace, and renewed blessing, the precious blessing of bringing others to taste of His love. Oh! the joy of being used by Him, and to breathe the atmosphere of His love!

The divine life in the believer needs bread, the bread of life, the word of the living God; where this hunger born from above is failing, either there is no life, or there is no communion. Where there is no love of the brethren, can there be life?

When private prayer or the prayer meeting is a burden, is that not a sign of life being at a low ebb, or of total absence of life?

There was no indifference, no easy-going life for Him when our gracious Lord took in hand our salvation, His great atoning, life-giving work. It meant for Him to "pour out His soul unto death," to give His life a ransom for many. To such love can there be a cold response from those who receive ETERNAL LIFE from Him?

How can a Sinner become a Child of God?

By GEORGE F. TRENCH, Ardfer.

UNTIL my twentieth year I could not have answered this question. For though my father, who had been a Cavalry Officer in India, and who was now an Evangelical Rector, had taught and grounded me well in the Christian faith, I could not have said that I was a child of God, and would have disputed the power of anyone to do so.

When being prepared for Confirmation, as the lessons went on, I became more and more deeply convinced that I had neither part nor lot in the matter; and when the final moment came and the Archbishop's hands were about to be laid on my head, I wished, and can still, after fifty years, remember the agony of it, that the floor of St. Patrick's Cathedral, in Dublin, might open and swallow me up.

Neither baptism alone, nor that with confirmation added, can make a sinful child regenerate.

But when the great Irish revival of 1859 came, flooding the land as with a tidal wave of blessing,

my soul, lying bound and helpless as a stranded wreck, was borne high and swift to the haven of salvation, eternal and assured.

I had heard the well-known Dr Henry Grattan Guinness, fresh from the scenes of the great American awakening, speaking to a great meeting of men, on the words, "Marvel not that I said unto you, Ye must be born again." That was the turning point. A son of man by natural birth, I must, to become a son of God, be born again. I remember his words to this day, "Born once, die twice; born twice, die once." They who know the second birth shall never know the second death.

From that night I knew that I was unsaved, and often feared to fall asleep, lest I should wake in the outer darkness. But soon deliverance came. The light shone in. The great change took place. Dead in trespasses and sins, the breath of the Spirit gave me life. Suddenly all the old things began to pass away, and all things took a new form in relation to my soul. The baser tastes and desires became hateful, the worldly gaities and pleasures frivolous and contemptible, and God became real. Instantly the irksomeness of religion disappeared, and all who served God and loved Christ became dear and desirable. It was a spiritual revolution, deep and abiding, an awakening from the sleep of indifference to the bright day of divine and ever deepening gladness.

The new birth is not brought about by a rite of any kind, however solemn, nor yet by the forming of new resolutions and habits of religion and forsaking of sin. These may and will follow, but birth, regeneration, is divine not human work. It is the breath of God. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh nor whither it goeth,

so is every one that is born of the Spirit" (John iii. 8).

The effect of this new birth of the Spirit is sonship, we are born of God (1 John iii. 9). "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God." "Beloved, now are we children of God" (1 John iii. 1, 2, R.V.).

This is not the common inheritance of man, it is the exclusive privilege of the regenerate. "In this the children of God are manifested and the children of the devil." It is by the second birth that we pass from the one class into the other. So that if anyone ask, How may I become a child of God? the answer is ready and plain: "Ye must be born again." But now comes the further and obvious question, "When does this new birth take place?" The answer is to be found in John i. 12. "As many as received Him (the Lord Jesus Christ), to them gave He the right to become children of God, even to them that believe on His name" (John i. 12, R.V.).

If the new birth is the act of God, the receiving of it is the act of man.

And here our responsibility comes in, when Christ is offered us in the Gospel, to receive Him when His name as Redeemer and Saviour is proclaimed, to believe on Him. It is a mental action, a decision, a making up of one's mind, as the phrase is. Long negligent of the gentle knocking of Him who standeth at the door, at last I hear His voice and open the door of my heart to admit Him (Rev. iii. 20).

But if any say, "I have always believed on Christ, for I was so trained in my youth." I reply, "Have you indeed?" Test yourself thus. Has your faith brought you peace with God? Have you consciously

received the forgiveness of your sins? (see Acts x. 43). Are you joyfully sensible of the great change of which we have been speaking?

If a man receives a guest, he is immediately aware of His presence in the house, and at his table. Are you so conscious of Christ's indwelling? If a wife believes the telegram that tells her of her husband's rescue from ship-wreck, at once peace, joy, and thankfulness flow into her heart.

Have these come to you by your believing the message of salvation?

Be not deceived, believing in Christ brings assurance of salvation (John v. 24) ; believing His promise gives us a sense of eternal security (John x. 23). "They shall never perish, and no one," He says, "shall snatch them out of My hand."

To believe on Christ is to begin heaven here below, so great is the calm, the peace, the fearlessness, the joyful hope it brings. And there is no presumption in thus believing. For it expresses no confidence at all in self, but all in Christ. "These things have I written unto you that believe that ye may know that ye have eternal life." We have it, and we know it. And the knowledge of it enables us to live in all things, if we will, as those who are children of God.

A Testimony from Canada

By G. OSBORNE TROOP.

THE Son of God in the days of His flesh cried aloud with a cry that the Holy Spirit has echoed through all the centuries: "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will *give* you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of

Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."

I. A reverent study of these beautiful words is calculated to remove much misconception of what it really means to be a true Christian. The compassionate Redeemer does not say, "Come unto Me, all ye that are worthy, all ye that have made yourselves fit to come," but "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden," so that every soul is included within the embrace of this unique invitation, who feels the need of rest. And the eager yet deeply contrite response of every burdened conscience surely ought to be—

"Just as I am, without one plea,
But that Thy Blood was shed for me,
And that Thou bid'st me come to Thee,
O Lamb of God, I come!"

This invitation is one the response to which is fraught with eternal issues. The rest the Saviour offers is a free gift; it cannot be bought by a lifetime of human effort. This Rest is on a parallel with eternal life. We cannot possibly have it apart from personal contact with the living Saviour. No man can merit this Rest, because it is a free gift, bestowed without money and without price upon every humble believer in the Rest-giver. No man can enter into the service of Christ, until he comes in all his need and sin and weariness and the welcome of the Saviour gives him Rest. Similarly no man can enter upon the service of Christ until he has received the gift of eternal life. A dead thing cannot serve, and the most gifted natural man is spiritually dead. Personal contact with the personal Saviour comes *first of all*, and that contact means life and

pardon and Rest. Without this believing, personal contact, even Baptism, Confirmation, and the Holy Communion cannot make a man a living Christian.

The Lord Himself has said once for all—"Except any one be born again, born anew, born from above, he cannot see the Kingdom of God."

The Spirit tells us through St. John—"As many as received Him, to them gave He the right to become children of God, even to them that believe on His name, *which were born*, not of *bloods* (Greek) nor of *the will of man, but of GOD.*"

And through St. Paul—"If any man be in Christ there is *a new creation.*"

Every true Christian is a miracle, a new creation of the Spirit of God, and every true Christian *begins* his relation with Christ with the gift of Rest, when

"The burden of his sins is rolled away."

II. Rest given and received, the Saviour adds—"Take My yoke upon you," and a yoke *involves two*. The disciple is yoked *with* his Master. No wonder the Redeemer goes on—"Learn of Me, for I am *meek and lowly* in heart." So lowly indeed as to bear one side of the yoke, and to go step by step with the believing yoke-fellow through all his service for evermore. The believer is never independent, but neither is he ever alone. The world looking upon the toiling, suffering Christian sees only one, but God sees *two*, and the form of the second is the form of His beloved Son. Step by step we go on with Him, learning as we go from our glorious Master, and FINDING in blessed experience "Rest unto our souls;" for His yoke is easy and His burden is light. And the service, which is now by faith, passes at the coming of the Lord into the open vision of the Face *of* Christ. "His servants shall serve Him, and they shall see His face."

The writer may add that shortly after his own Ordination the words came to him with all the light of a fresh revelation :—

“ I would not work my soul to save,
For that my Lord hath done ;
But I would work like any slave
From love to God’s dear Son.”

It makes all the difference in the world whether we are working for self or working for Christ. *He* does the saving while we do the trusting.

Reception and Regeneration

By W. E. VINE, M.A., Bath

“ AS many as received Him, to them gave He the right to become children of God, even to them that believe on His name ” (John i. 12, R.V.).

These words teach us that the right to become a child of God is the gift of Christ, that this gift is bestowed upon the one who receives Christ, and that to believe on His name is to receive Him.

Firstly, then, man’s natural birth does not constitute him a child of God : this relationship is not universal : by nature we are children of wrath (Eph. ii. 3) ; a time subsequent to natural birth is necessary for acceptance of Christ. Secondly, sonship to God, being a gift, is not to be obtained by way of compensation for good works, “ for by grace have ye been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves ; it is the gift of God : not of works, that no man should glory ” (Eph. ii. 8, 9). Thirdly, since to believe on His name is to receive

Him, this belief is more than mere acknowledgment of the truths of His being and work.

The verse quoted at the heading of this article contains an important change of tense; the tense of "received" is momentary, denoting that which occurs at a definite point of time; that of "believe" is continuous, denoting an abiding condition. Acceptance of Christ, then, in itself a matter of faith, by which we become sons of God, "for ye are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus" (Gal. iii. 26), is the beginning of that faith which is essentially the continuing characteristic of the child of God.

Further, the new birth ("birth from above," John iii. 3, mar.) is necessary for sonship to God, and this new birth is the immediate accompaniment of faith in Christ; for "whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is begotten of God" (1 John v. 1). Accordingly, when a person believes in the Lord Jesus Christ, Christ becomes his, and he is born of God.

Now "he that believeth on the Son hath eternal life" (John iii. 36), and "he that hath the Son hath the life" (1 John v. 12). Therefore, when a person receives Christ by faith, since he possesses the Son of God, eternal life is his also.

Since, then, to receive Christ is to become a son of God, and to have Christ is to have eternal life, eternal life is received at the time of the new birth.

Before a person believes in Christ, he is dead through trespasses and sins (Eph. ii. 1-5), but by faith he passes out of death into life (John v. 24), receives remission of sins (Acts x. 43), is justified (Rom. xiii. 39), and is in Christ (Eph. ii. 13). Now, "if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature" (2 Cor. v. 17). The words "new creature" or "new creation" (margin) teach us

that the new birth is not a change of the old nature ; a change of the old could not be a new creation.

For the new birth the power of the Holy Spirit and the Word of God are necessary (John iii. 3 ; Jas. i. 18 ; 1 Peter i. 23), and by these conviction of sin, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ, are wrought, but a person becomes a child of God when by faith he receives Christ.

To become a child of God is not in itself a process extending over a period. The actual relationship is preceded by conviction of sin, and this frequently lasts for a considerable time in which there is anxiety of soul and conflict of feeling ; but this does not make a person a child of God : that blessing is bestowed at the definite time of acceptance of Christ.

This, too, means the absolute certainty of salvation. One cannot actually receive a gift without knowledge of the possession of it ; so with the gift of the right to become a child of God, and the gift of eternal life in Christ bestowed upon the repentant sinner by the God of grace. God's will is that we should know here and now that He has fulfilled His promise to the believer : " these things have I written unto you, that ye may know that ye have eternal life, even unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God " (1 John v. 13).

The writer has enjoyed, for many years, the certainty of his salvation, accomplished in the death of Him who was delivered up for our trespasses, and was raised for our justification.

In conclusion, while the Word of God is most explicit as to the present assurance of salvation and eternal life in Christ Jesus for one who accepts Him by faith, solemn warnings are given, declaring

that unless a person does experience the new birth, he cannot see the kingdom of God (John iii. 3), that the unbeliever shall not see life, but that the wrath of God abideth on him (verse 36), a wrath which will come on the sons of disobedience (Eph. v. 6; see also Mark xvi. 16, and Rev. xx. 15). Since the Scriptures show so clearly that apart from faith in Christ no one will see life, and since God has declared that now is the acceptable time, now is the day of salvation (2 Cor. vi. 2), may any reader, who hitherto has not definitely accepted the Lord Jesus Christ, delay not to do so, but, with repentance toward God, even now become a "child of God through faith in Christ Jesus."

What Think Ye of Christ?

By EDWARD E. WHITFIELD, London.

THIS question, as to How and When a man becomes a child of God, the writer will answer in the light of his own experience interpreted by Scripture.

Christ came into this world as sent by God and by Him offered to men for their acceptance. Upon any man or woman, boy or girl, who responds by believing on Christ's name, by submission to His claims, He confers the title of child of God (John i. 12), God's use of His word of truth in the soul being the efficient cause of that soul's blessing (Jas. i. 18; 1 Pet. i. 23).

It is all a question of our attitude towards the Person of Christ, our appreciation of Him as the One (1) whom we need absolutely; (2) with whom we resolve to take sides against the world or mere religionists, by whom respectively His claims have been ignored or disowned. When a soul thus

comes into vital contact with Christ, a personal relationship by grace is established between that soul and Christ, whereby the individual becomes a child of God.

Such as "receive" Him are "turned from darkness to light" (Acts xxvi. 18), and begin, however imperfectly or unintelligently, to wait for His return from heaven (1 Thess. i. 10). All such place their dependence thenceforth in the blessed Son as the Revealer of Himself, of His *grace*. Their understanding of *the doctrine* of the atonement may be feeble; but their faith and hope in Christ is at the same time in God Himself, because they believe that He, who delivered the Lord Jesus for their offences, raised Him from among the dead (1 Pet. i. 10) for their justification (Rom. iv. 25). Appreciation of His Person comes before that of His work, because the Lord Jesus is first of all "the Way" to God, and that being realised, the soul is prepared for acceptance of Him as the "Truth," in respect now also of His work, which leads to enjoyment through the Spirit (Rom. viii. 15) of knowledge of Him as "the Life" (John xiv. 6; Col. iii. 3 f).

Knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ, on the part of the believer, is to be developed eternally, because the life so imparted is eternal (John xvii. 3); but the establishment of the relationship between the soul and the Saviour, which is expressed by the person being described as a "child of God," is the ABC of the spiritual life. Such an one ceases to be under the dominion of darkness (Acts xxvi. 18; Col. i. 13), becoming from the very first a "child of light" (John xii. 36) because God, his Father is Light (1 John i. 5).

Having experienced the happiness of inwardly learning that one has thus been "born again," the

next step is to definitely confess Christ in the way appointed for and common to all, so as to side with Him, by wearing His badge, and bearing His reproach. This entails detachment from the world, as being dead to sin, and alive to God, henceforth to be in the service of Christ alone (Rom. vi. 3 f; 2 Cor. v. 15), as having His portion before God (1 John iv. 17).

The child of God in all his conduct has from the outset to become an imitator of his Father (Eph. v. 1), to "walk in the Spirit" (Gal. v. 16; Rom. viii. 4), God's purpose being that His children should day by day have personal communion with Him in the intimacy of the relationship, so as to bear fruit unto Him; and this is realised more or less as the conduct of each one who does not grieve the Holy Spirit, by whom he is indwelt, and who is the power of such communion (Eph. iv. 30; 2 Cor. xiii. 14; Phil. ii. 1). When this is disturbed by backsliding, great or small, through allowance of the "flesh" (Rom. vii. 18; Eph. iv. 22), the child of God needs restoration of soul brought about by his self-judgment (1 Cor. xi. 31), and confession to God (1 John i. 8). Thereupon, Jesus Christ, the Righteous, by His ministry, as Advocate with the Father (1 John ii. 1) restores the soul, and communion is recovered.

The new-born child of God has everything to learn; in particular as to *sin*, and God's way of dealing with it; also the difference between justification by faith (Rom. iii. 22-26) and justification by works (Jas. ii. 24), and so the claims of holiness and righteousness, in respect of all which he makes many mistakes (James iii. 2), his own frailty in both thought and deed being constantly brought home to him. Whilst blessing and happiness, and, accordingly, fruitfulness,

in the Lord's service, are thus impaired, the essential, vital relationship of a "child of God" is never disturbed. Nevertheless, the believer has daily to be exercised in the making sure that "call and election" which pertains to the coming kingdom (Jas. ii. 5 ; 2 Pet. i. 10 f), the sphere of enjoyment of reward or deprivation of it, that is quite distinct from the possession of eternal life, which attaches indefeasibly to God's work of grace, peculiar to Himself, to whom be all the glory !

The Fatherhood of God

By FRANK H. WHITE, London.

GREAT is the mystery of the New Birth, so great that we may well tremble to write thereon, lest we "darken counsel by words without knowledge." It was a saying of one of the early Christian mystics that he would "rather experience penitence than know how to define it." So with the great doctrine of the spiritual regeneration of a fallen son or daughter of the first Adam, it is to be *experienced*, but who shall explain it? Many have attempted to do so, but often their explanations have needed to be explained. In the light of Holy Scripture, and especially the express teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, in the third chapter of the Gospel of John, we may testify of it as an undoubted reality, we may declare its absolute and universal necessity, in order even to see the kingdom of God ; we may point out in plain, unadorned language how it may be realised, and what are some of its invariable accompaniments ; but *how* the New Creature life is produced in the hidden recesses of a human soul, who can say? Even a natural birth

is full of mystery (Eccles. xi. 5 ; Job xxxi. 6); how much more a spiritual, yet the *fact* of life and being in both cases is very apparent. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof," said our Lord to the enquiring ruler of the Jews; "but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth, so is every one that is born of the Spirit." Incomprehensible and uncontrollable as is the "way" of the Holy Ghost in regeneration, we may yet "hear the sound thereof," even to its faintest whisper. The manner and method of His gracious sovereign actings are necessarily hidden from mortal view, but not so their manifestations. These are to be both seen and felt. Hence, with the deepest reverence, we may, in the very words of our Divine Lord Himself, say, "We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen."

Indeed, it is as a witness, rather than a teacher, that I am writing. As if it were but yesterday, I can see the spot where, in an hour of sore trial, shortly after my conversion, I stood and first cried, "Father, Father, my Father!" I had often said, "*Our* Father" in repeating the Lord's prayer; quite another thing this. To merely "say" and to "*cry*" are not the same. Oh the unutterable relief and rest it gave me to pour out my full heart of grief and apprehension into the ear of an Almighty and pitying Father! Fifty-three years have run their course since then, but to-day, by the exceeding grace of God, I can joyfully testify that not only does the blessed relationship hold, but that the happy consciousness thereof remains, only in a deeper and fuller measure. I still cry, "Father, O my Father! Sometimes it is all I can do, but it is enough, I am comforted, I am helped; if not at the moment, I wait, and though the vision tarry, yet, in an

appointed time, it will surely come. This child-cry is not of nature. Its secret is to be found in this inspired sentence : "*Because* ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts crying, Abba, Father" (Gal. iv. 6). Spiritual sonship is something vastly more than that which, alas, so many to-day are contenting themselves with—a "Universal Fatherhood," irrespective of a supernatural, spiritual birth, based simply on creaturehood. God is the "Father of all spirits," Creator and Maker of all mankind, "seeing He giveth to all life, and breath, and all things." All are "His offspring" in this sense, for "in Him" all men, even such as deny His very existence, "live and move and have their being."

Though the Fatherhood of Creation is a great thing, the Fatherhood of Grace is more than great, it is wonderful ! It is wonderful !—a sinner and an alien made a holy happy child of God. It was the thought of this which moved the beloved Apostle to exclaim with rapture, "Behold (see !) what manner," what kind of love, the Father hath bestowed on us that we should be called the sons (*children*, the word is), divinely born children; possessing not only the name and title, but the nature and disposition of a child. The R.V. rightly adds, "and (such) we are," really *are*.

The child relationship here is a *bestowed*, not an inherited relationship ; not an earthly but heavenly birthright ; not of nature but of grace ; not by human generation, but by Divine *re*-generation. It is the same special and spiritual relationship, as witnessed to in John's Gospel (i. 12), and there declared to be the possession, not of all men, not even of the children of Abraham, privileged as they were as a nation, but a divinely bestowed *gift* to those, and those only, who had received "the

Lord Jesus Christ as their Redeemer and Saviour," to them in distinction from the great body of the people of the Jews, who rejected Him as such, to these gave He the power to become the sons of God (here again, the word is *children*—children not in name only, but in nature), even to them who believe on His name. Notice the word "*become*" in this enlightening Scripture. "Power, or, rather, authority to *become*," that is to be something which they had not been before. It was not a mere "*disclosure of a relationship which already existed*," but something to which previously they had been strangers. "Born, not of blood," no mere *blood relationship*, descending from father to son, however honourable the descent may be, "not of the will of the flesh," that is man in his fallen condition, "nor of the will (purpose) of man (be he parent or priest), but of God." Not by human generation, but by divine *RE*-generation. Could any language more emphatically express the speciality and reality of the child relationship of which we witness, than this threefold denial of any earthly or merely human origin, or, the declaration of those two words "of (or from) God"? Well may one tremble to add ought else but, Wonderful! Wonderful!

By no process of *evolution* or *education* can a natural man be developed into a spiritual man. Regeneration is not the eradication of the old nature, but the impartation of a new and divine nature. It is not the old man renovated or reformed, but altogether another man—a "*new* different man," born.

"If any man be in Christ he is a new creature" (or there is a new creation), created in Christ Jesus. The only regenerate man, as Scripture and all true Christian experience testify, is an altered—a changed

man—changed indeed, so changed that “the world knoweth him not,” but the change is not in his old sinful nature, inherited from Adam, *that* is not changed ; it remains to the end the same as before “corrupt according to the deceitful lusts” (desires). “That which is born of the flesh is flesh,” and only flesh, however beautified or outwardly adorned, it is still the flesh in which “dwelleth no good thing.” It is the same “flesh” whether it be the flesh of a Jew or a Gentile, a learned Rabbi or a Magdalene. To both alike the word of the Lord is, “Ye must be born again.” Moreover, the “flesh,” or old nature, of a regenerate man is the same as that of an unregenerate. “Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?” Not one.

What a relationship ! And all is so real ! We *are* His children, “and if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ,” the true seed of Abraham ; heirs according to the promise ; no more aliens and strangers, and as such “afar off,” but brought near, in the nearness, not of servant, or friend, but a child, a real child. This is the “manner” of His love : partakers of His heritage ; not only life, but *His* life ; “quickened together with Him, so that He could say, “Because I live, ye shall live also.” In revival days the staple of the preaching was the three R’s :

Ruin by the fall ;

Redemption by blood ;

Regeneration by the Spirit.

In the first is the *necessity* for the last ; in the second its *possibility*. These three fundamental doctrines are to be distinguished but not dissevered. Regeneration assumes both our ruin and redemption. Adoption confers the name—the title of sons ; birth the child nature—meetness for the heavenly inheritance. Regeneration by the Holy Ghost, and

reconciliation by the uplifting in death of the Lord Jesus Christ, is the two-fold need of every sinner who would be saved. Over the portal of the kingdom of God may be seen two inscriptions as in letters of fire, "NO REGENERATION ; NO ENTRANCE." "Without shedding of blood is no remission." "The pure in heart shall see God." "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." The one gives us the capacity for the Kingdom, the other the right : the one rectifies our nature, the other adjusts our relation to God. Without the one we cannot see Him ; without the other He cannot see us.

But (I think I hear my reader ask), how and when is all this realised? How am I to possess this new and blessed life? What must I do? I answer, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ." "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God" (1 John v. 1). "Ye are all the children of God," says Paul, "by faith in Christ Jesus" (Gal. iii. 26); or, to return to John i. 12, 13, "Even to them that *believe* on His name." To believe on His name is to believe in all *that* Name stands for. Receive Him as being, and as being *to you*, all that He declares Himself to be, Redeemer, Saviour, Lord, Righteousness before God, Sonship, and all that high and holy relationship carries. He Himself is the answer, both to the "How can these things be?" of Nicodemus (John iii. 9), and the "How can we know the way?" of Thomas (John xiv. 5). Christ's answer to the first on the human side was, "God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John iii. 16). The answer to the second is: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life" (John xiv. 6) : the true and living way. "No man cometh unto the Father but by Me." This is equivalent to

saying— If any man does come through *Me* he shall find the Father, and shall, on coming, become a son. Christ is the direct authoritative immediate way to sonship. When you receive Him you are in the Way, for the Way is in you. Christ is the far-off sinner's way to the Father's heart, as He is the only way of God the Father to the sinner's heart. And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life" (1 John v. 12).

Where Art Thou?

By W. P. DOUGLAS, Canada.

IT is now more than thirty years since God in His infinite love put me "among the children."

The *place where* it occurred was in New York City. The *time when* it took place was April 17, 1876. The manner in which it came to pass was by the reception of Christ (see John i. 12).

Influenced by a mother who ever sought my spiritual welfare, I was induced to attend evangelistic meetings then being held in the city of New York. One night, while I listened to Mr D. L. Moody preaching from the question God addressed to Adam, Gen. iii. 9, "Where art thou?" the Spirit of God applied the question to my soul, and that night, for the first time in my life, I discovered my whereabouts spiritually before God. I had entered the hall a thoughtless, careless sinner, I left it with the arrow from God's quiver sticking deep and fast in my soul. I could say at that time, like another

who felt the pressure of God's hand heavy upon him, "I chattered like a crane and mourned like a dove, while to mirth I said, 'Thou art mad.'"

My state as a sinner continued to give me trouble, until, at length, God was pleased in His love and grace to make known to me His great salvation. After some weeks of soul trouble I found Rest, Peace, and Joy in believing His blessed word contained in John v. 24.

Amid the confusion of conflicting opinions, and the diversity of mind concerning How and When God forgives sins, how sure a resting place, and safe an anchorage, does the perplexed but trusting heart find in the word of God! "The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple." Plainly, simply, yet most definitely has God drawn the line of demarkation in "the Scriptures of truth" between saved and unsaved, as for instance in the following passages of Scripture: The children of God (1 John iii. 10; Rom. viii. 16); Children of the Devil (1 John iii. 10); The sons of God (Rom. viii. 19); Sons of disobedience (Eph. ii. 2); Children of light (1 Thess. v. 5); Children of the wicked one (Matt. xiii. 38); Children of the day (1 Thess. v. 5); Children of wrath (Eph. ii. 3).

Dear friend, to which side do you belong? God thus in His infinite wisdom fortifies the hearts of all subject to His word, against that most deceptive and destructive theory so widely published from pulpit and press, "The universal fatherhood of God, and the common brotherhood of man." Such a theory would rob God of His Majesty and holiness, and man of his responsibility and guilt as a sinner before God.

The fact of the universal ruin and sinnership of man is asserted, reiterated, and emphasised by God in His word. By natural birth man is constituted a

sinner, inheriting a nature opposed to God, and a mind at enmity with Him, which is "not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (Rom. viii. 7). "A sinner," "ungodly," "without strength," and an enemy is the divine *witness* concerning man apart from God's regenerating and saving grace in Rom. v., and as such he is subject to God's judgment, "the lake of fire which is the second death" (Rev. xx. 12-14). Think for a moment of man, brought under the power of the Devil, and sin as the consequence of Adam's transgression, with a heart alienated from God; a mind opposed to Him; a conscience deadened to His claims; a *soul* utterly unresponsive to His love, with every fibre of his being corrupted and defiled by sin. Such an one art thou, dear reader, if still a stranger to the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit, and to the precious blood of Christ.

But to man, guilty, ruined, lost, the Grace, Love and Pity of God's great heart were manifested, as we read, "God commendeth His love toward us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us" (Rom. v. 8).

Heaven's choicest treasure, the Father's only and well-beloved Son, He who was "daily His delight," "before His works of old" or "ever the earth was," saw us ruined by the fall, "yet loved us notwithstanding all." "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us." Wondrous condescension! Therefore said the Apostle, "Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness."

Six hundred years before He came to seek and save the lost, the question had been asked, "How shall I put thee among the children?" (Jer. iii. 19). Many and varied have been the answers man in his blindness and ignorance has endeavoured to give during the intervening centuries. But now God

introduces us to *One*; "His Son" (Heb. i. 1-3). Who, because the children were partakers of flesh and blood, also took part of the same, and thus became their Kinsman and Redeemer.

One great object on which He had set His heart, and which was the purpose of the Father, was the bringing of many sons unto glory (Heb. ii. 10). This He could only attain by death, even the death of the cross. Nor could He be deterred, blessed be His holy name, from accomplishing His purpose. Neither by the deep dark sorrows of soul which were His in Gethsemane, nor by the denser, deeper sorrows of Calvary, when in all its infinite and solemn reality the holy righteous wrath of a sin-hating God fell on Him. Deserted by man, forsaken by God, when in the loneliness of that awful hour He cried, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" He experienced sorrows more than tongue can tell, yet it had to be thus ere He could link us with Himself in resurrection and accomplish the eternal purposes of God. The far-reaching and eternal results of the death of Christ may well fill our hearts with adoring wonder and our mouths with grateful praise, as we consider the wondrous relationship into which it brings every sinner of Adam's fallen race, who rests upon it; a relationship which time cannot change, and death cannot break; a relationship which He shall never sever nor disclaim, but which He will acclaim in the coming day before the universe. "Behold I and the children whom God hath given Me."

ALL are not Children of God

By W. R. MOORE, B.A., Oxford

"WE are the offspring of God," saith Paul, the Apostle, speaking to the Athenians on Mars' Hill, and to God we are indebted for "life, and breath, and all things." Yet all are not children of God, or partakers of the Divine nature. For there is a new creation of which Jesus Christ is "the beginning" and "the firstborn among many brethren." And He Himself, speaking to a religious man, Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews, said: "Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." And He emphasised this solemn statement by these words: "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit. *Ye must be born again.*"

No one can "see" or "enter the kingdom of God," except he be born from above. You may here exclaim in the words of Nicodemus, "How can these things be?" As in his days so in ours, men have "rendered the truth of God of none effect by their tradition."

It is well, therefore, to notice three solemn negatives used by the Spirit of God to impress upon the hearts of men certain human fallacies in regard to the reception of the New Birth.

In the Gospel according to John (chap. i. verse 11), it is written: "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not. But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of

the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." It is quite apparent, therefore, that the new birth is *not*

1. Of blood ;
2. Of the will of the flesh ;
3. Of the will of man.

I. "Not of Blood."

The natural child, though of godly parentage, has no title to spiritual possessions. Such an one may have been favoured with the hallowed influence of a Christian home, and the prayerful training of saintly parents, and yet remain a stranger to the grace of God.

It is possible to claim descent from martyred ancestors and yet to have no part in their joyful hope. A Jew might be one outwardly, and still not a true Israelite. Solemn responsibilities attach to the privileges of Christian parentage and training, and greater will be the condemnation of those who, in receipt of these blessings, believe not the Gospel of salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.

II. "Nor of the will of the flesh."

As soon as a natural man perceives that he has "sinned, and come short of the glory of God," his first thought is, so to improve himself that he may become fit for the presence of God. Thus did Adam and Eve after their disobedience in the garden of Eden. When they knew that they were naked, they sewed fig leaves together to make themselves aprons. This was of "the will of the flesh."

God took from them their self-made coverings, and gave them vesture of His own providing: a covering that was the result of the shedding of blood, a type of the righteousness of Christ, in

which the sinner may appear before God through faith in His blood.

Self-effort cannot atone for sin. Present right cannot undo past wrong. We must acknowledge that we are by nature children of disobedience, and, therefore, "children of wrath," before we can become "children of God by faith in Christ Jesus."

III. "Nor of the will of man."

What a limitation we have here to the operations of humanity !

Man may civilize, educate, and reform, but he cannot re-create.

Man may improve human habits and earthly environment, but he cannot transform a child of wrath into a child of God. Nor is it possible for the godliest man, by prayer or effort, by religious ordinance, or earnest pleading, to accomplish such a work. This statement is conclusive: "*Not of the will of man.*" Weigh this statement well, lest you be deceived by the pretensions of men, or the assumptions of ecclesiastical organizations. We must not err here, for remember, "Except a man be born from above, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

The Apostle Paul was for long a self-deceived man. "Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews, as touching the law a Pharisee, concerning zeal, persecuting the Church, touching the righteousness which is in the law blameless."

"But," he adds, "what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ." So he describes his religious history.

May you personally echo these words of his: "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ by whom the world is

crucified unto me, and I unto the world. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything or uncircumcision, but *a new creature*." He, at any rate, did not owe his new life either to—

Hereditary privileges,
Human efforts, or
Religious ordinances,

but only to God.

We have dealt with the negative side of the "new birth," and have shown from the Word of God what it is not. Let us now consider from the same source what it is.

"As many as received Him to them gave He power (ability) to become sons of God, even to them that believe on His name, which were born . . . of God."

To receive Jesus Christ, the Saviour of sinners, as my own personal Saviour, is to receive eternal life: for "he that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." And the Apostle John adds, "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye might know that ye have eternal life." And the Lord Jesus Christ, in explaining to Nicodemus what the "new birth" meant; and how it was to be received, declared: "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life."

The disobedient Israelites of whom the Lord spake—

1. Were dying through disobedience, (but)
2. They acknowledged their condition,
3. Trusted in the remedy, and
4. Were made perfectly whole.

So must the sinner now who is "guilty before God," and "dead in trespasses and in sins,"

1. Acknowledge his sin, and
2. Accept Christ as his Saviour.

Then will he be made partaker of the divine nature, and make manifest the life of Christ in his daily walk and conversation.

The Apostle Peter writes thus to those who were begotten again: "Ye were . . . redeemed . . . with the precious blood of Christ . . . *being born again*, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God which liveth and abideth for ever." And this did our Lord Himself speak: "He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, *hath* everlasting life, and *shall not come* into judgment, but *is passed* from death unto life." How, then, can I know that I have been born again? you ask. "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God."

We conclude with these triumphant words of the Apostle John, written to those who were begotten again: "Beloved, now are we the children of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. And every man that hath this hope in Him, purifieth himself, even as He is pure."

A Striking Conversion of 1859

By SAMUEL PRENTER, M. A., D. D., Greystone,
Co. Wicklow, Ireland.

I DO not know that the following short personal story can be of much interest to any who do not know me ; whilst to those who do, as I have never sought much to fasten attention upon myself, it may seem a little out of character. Throughout life, my great ambition has been to point men to the living Christ. If now I seem to break the seal of reticence in reference to this most notable spiritual event of my life it is only in the simple hope that God may be glorified thereby, and others encouraged and helped. In this short story I have a plain fact to state, and a brief explanation to offer. Both the fact and the explanation can best be set forth in simple narrative form.

It was in early summer of 1859 that the event took place which I have always regarded as the crucial event and turning point of my life, the hour of my saving conversion to God, when, by divine grace, I passed out of darkness into His marvellous light. I had been brought up in as godly a home as ever a child was born into. Both my parents were devoted servants of God who ordered their household and all their affairs in strict Biblical fashion, and trained their children (there were six of us) in the nurture and admonition of the Lord ; we children were carefully grounded in a knowledge of the Scriptures, and painfully instructed in the words and doctrines of the Shorter Catechism. Perhaps there was a certain old-world austerity in our Puritan home in our conception of God, and in our prohibited catalogue of sins. At any rate one funda-

mental truth my parents kept continually before our eyes, and that was, the truth unfolded in the 3rd chapter of John's Gospel, the necessity of the new birth as the starting point of the Christian life. I never remember a time when I was not familiar with this fundamental doctrine. It lay at the basis of all parental instruction ; it was also the burden of all the family prayers ; and it was made the key to all Scripture doctrine and to all Christian character. I was definitely taught to look for and to expect such a change in my own life, if I was ever to be a child of God, or ever to be fitted for my being of any real service in His kingdom. This conviction became part and parcel of my very being, and it is this inbred conviction which is the true starting point of my story.

For several years I kept looking for this change, but it never came. Then there sprang up in my mind another conviction that seemed to grow out of the first, viz., that I had so grieved the Holy Spirit with my sin that I was not a fit subject for regeneration, and that the delay was due to my own stubborn wilfulness. This sense of sin took possession of my heart to such an extent that though I was reputed to be a very happy boy and was a ring-leader in nearly all mischievous pranks at school I used often to go to bed with the thought that God was so grieved with me that it could only be owing to His mercy if I ever should see the next morning ; many a morning I awoke with a sense of wonder that I was still alive. The burden of guilt became at times intolerable and even in despair plunged me into many wayward acts of sin, such as Sabbath desecration, disobedience and thoughtless cruelty towards my fellows. I had a sort of juvenile logic that if I had to perish, I should at anyrate perish boldly. I look back upon this chapter of my life,

happy on the surface; wretched at the heart, frank and open to outward appearance, and yet secretly burdened with problems of life and death that I never spoke of even to my mother, with amazement now. It lasted some time, down to my fifteenth year. I had almost at that early time abandoned myself to the despair of ever being a child of God. I remember listening to my father one Sabbath day unfolding the Calvinistic doctrine of reprobation. I asked him to explain it again and again, and I shall never forget the concealed horror with which I came to the conclusion that I was certainly one of the reprobate.

It has been one of the tasks I have often imposed upon myself, which I hope to discharge before I die, to tell fully the story of such an experience. I believe that this condition of mind is far more common than we often suppose, and that it is the first spiritual water-shed from which many lives depart like streams in contrary directions, some towards the kingdom of God, others towards recklessness and sin and the world. At this time, in the year 1857, there came a very potent spiritual force into my life, Rev. Jackson Smyth, afterwards Dr. Smyth, of Armagh, became our minister in first Dromore. He was a most attractive and delightful young minister, and soon he took notice of me, and he was the first outside our own family who by some sort of affinity or insight got hold of me, and made me feel that perhaps after all I was not one of the reprobate. He little knew what a blessing he was to me. Then I took to reading the "Remains of Robert Murray M'Cheyne," a book then in great vogue amongst serious people; and which I still regard as the finest devotional volume in the English language. I used often to peruse it with tears, and always with a sort of hushed awe.

Spurgeon's sermons also fell my way, and they always filled me with hope. But the Bible was my theme and always my chief study. I remember well committing whole books of the Bible to memory. But still I knew perfectly that I was not born again. Then came the revival of 1859. I heard of it in County Antrim, and I feared it would never reach County Down, my own county. At last it came, but, as I was then suffering from ill health, I was not allowed to attend the meetings. My elder brother whom I loved passionately attended and was converted. This fact filled me with an agony of desire that I might be allowed to join my dear brother in God's household. Days and even weeks flew past, and still I was outside the kingdom of God. At last one Sabbath evening, I had been reading M'Cheyne's "Another Lily Gathered," and I felt sure that if I were to die then I should certainly go to hell. A great resolve came into my mind, and I carried it out. I went to my room and locked the door, and resolved that I would never leave that room until Christ had laid hold of me and saved me from sin, and I had found pardon and peace in Him. I cannot tell the history of those hours; what I know is, that my time had come, and the spiritual conflict for a lad fifteen years of age through which I passed during the early hours of that Sabbath evening was such as I do not feel able to translate into words. But after hours of darkness suddenly a heavenly light broke into my soul, and in that light I believe salvation truly entered *into my life*. It came suddenly as with a rush, and it was a real emancipation of heart and conscience before God. Just as I could not describe the pain, so I could not describe the subsequent joy. Christ became as real to me, as if I gazed upon Him with my bodily

eyes, and even more so. He filled and flooded my whole being with Himself, and my joy was such that I spent the whole night in an ecstasy of freedom, as if I had been in heaven. When the morning came, I spoke of my new experience to everybody, and from that hour I began to live for God and for men. It is fifty years since this personal event, and God knows how very feebly and imperfectly I have followed Christ since then. But, at anyrate, I have still kept trusting and looking to Jesus. In that summer night, in the secrecy of my own room, I had the clearest vision I have ever had of the grace of God, of the transcendent beauty of Christ, of the Christian ideal of life, of the possibility of personal holiness, and of the hideousness of sin. "Heaven lies about us in our infancy." This line of Wordsworth's was not then known to me, but I have never read it since without thinking of those early hours of my new-born life. This is my plain story, which is to me the most important fact in my experience, and which I now confide to others, God knows, with no desire but that it may be for their good.

My parents have passed long since to the better land, and my elder brother, who became a far nobler and brighter man than ever I have been, died rather suddenly three years ago in Pittsburg. He came into the world before me ; he passed into the kingdom of God before me ; and now, by God's grace, he has been taken home to the Father's house before me. When my time comes, may I, too, be ready !

The Necessity is Absolute

“Ye Must Be Born Again.”

By Dr. R. A. TORREY,

NO one can be saved unless he is born again by the power of God's Holy Spirit. “Ye must be born again” (John iii. 3, 7), says Jesus. The necessity is absolute, not merely ye *may* be born again—though that is true—but ye *must* be born again. Nothing will take the place of the new birth. Baptism will not take the place of the new birth. Confirmation will not take the place of the new birth. Simon Magus (Acts viii. 13) was baptised; but when Peter and John came down and perceived his character, Peter said unto him, “Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter, for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. Thou art in the gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity”—a baptised, lost sinner.

No performance of religious rites will take the place of the new birth. A great many people are depending upon the fact that they say their prayers, read their Bibles, go to church, partake of the sacrament, and perform other duties, but all that will not take the place of the new birth. Orthodoxy of faith will not take the place of the new birth. A great many people are saying, “I believe the Apostles' Creed, I believe in the Athanasian Creed, I believe in the Nicene Creed, I say the Catechism; I am orthodox; I hold right views about Christ, right views about the Bible, right views about the Atonement.” You can be orthodox upon every doctrine, and be lost for ever.

Culture and refinement, and outward correctness of life will not take the place of the new birth. The

trouble with us is not merely with our outward life; the trouble is in the heart, in the very deepest depths of our inward life, and merely to reform your outward life will not save you. Suppose I had a rotten apple. I could take that apple to an artist, have him put a coating of wax on its surface, and then paint it till it was the most beautiful-looking apple you ever saw, but it would be just as rotten at heart as ever, and one bite into it would be a bite into decay. The trouble is that out of Christ you are rotten in the heart, and mere culture, mere refinement, mere respectability, mere morality, is simply putting a coating of wax on the outside and painting it up. You must be changed, down to the deepest depths of your being. "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be *born again*, he cannot see the Kingdom of God" (John iii. 3).

Are you born again? Now, I think a good many of you will say, "No, I am not. Can you tell me what I must do right now to be born again?" I can. You will find it in John i. 12: "As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His Name." We are born again by God's Holy Spirit, through His Word, the moment we receive Christ. When you take Christ into your heart, Christ transforms you through and through, in a moment. I care not how worldly you are, I care not how sinful you are, I care not how hard you are—anyone to-day that will throw his heart open and let Jesus come in to rule and reign, God will make that one a new creature in a moment.

"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2 Cor. v. 17).

The Salvation or Loss of a Soul

By ROBERT TELFER, Toronto, Canada.

"WHY! we are *all* children of God" is a statement one often hears from persons when the pointed question is asked, "Are you a child of God?" This answer is, however, opposed to the teaching of the word of God which is clear about this, as about every question relating to eternity. It says, "Ye are all the sons of God *by faith* in Christ Jesus" (Gal. iii. 26). So that this "all" applies to believers only.

Faith is the empty hand of the sinner that accepts the gift of eternal life, which was purchased by the death of Christ on the cross for sinners, and just as the Israelite in Exodus xii. had to *sprinkle* the blood of the Passover Lamb ere he was safe from the doom of Egypt, so the convicted sinner now has to *appropriate* a crucified Saviour for his own need ere he can be saved from coming wrath and made a child of God.

By *nature* we are all "children of wrath" (Eph. ii. 3). The psalmist goes to the root of the matter when he says in Ps. li. 5: "Behold I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." Therefore the new birth (John iii. 3) is necessary in order to become a child of God. No amount of careful upbringing or religious training can bring one into God's family, or else Nicodemus, who was a moral and religious man, would not have needed to be "born again" (John iii. 1).

The writer was religiously brought up, was never intoxicated in his life, nor a swearer. He said prayers twice a day, and attended church regularly,

and, of course, thought he was on his way to heaven, or, at least, nearly sure of getting there. However, in the month of June, 1877, he made the startling discovery that with all his morality and religiousness he was not on the way to heaven at all, but, on the contrary, going down the broad road, like the openly ungodly. For a whole month he tried to make himself fit for heaven by more earnest prayers and more rigid rules for living, until, wearied with trying to save himself, he came to the end of all his own resources, then it was that his eyes were turned away from himself to Christ dying for him, as the sin-bearer, and by believing on Him as his own personal Saviour he was at once saved (Rom. x. 9, 10).

Let me here say that conviction of sin, necessary as that is, is not conversion to God. No matter how deeply convicted a sinner may be, he does not become a child of God until Christ is received (John i. 12).

You may by persistent industry regain lost wealth, and by a change of climate regain lost health, but if you lose your soul that loss can never be remedied. It will be an eternal loss to be shut out of heaven and the joy and glory of God's presence, to be forever shut up in conscious torment in the lake of fire (Rev. xiv. 10, 11).

If the reader is not certain that he is saved, flee to Christ now, ere "The Master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door." He died for sinners; He lives to save sinners. How can you bear the thought of living and dying without Him? Time is short, and life is uncertain. Christ died for the ungodly. Trust Him now and you will be eternally saved.

